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Karl Bath's trinitarian theology : a study in Karl Bath's analogical use of the pattern of 'perichoresis' and the relationship between divine action and human action in the ecclesiastical context

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KARL BARTH'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY:
A STUDY IN KARL BARTH'S ANALOGICAL USE OF THE PATTERN
OF *PERICHORESIS* AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVINE
ACTION AND HUMAN ACTION IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONTEXT.

**SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FACULTY OF
THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
LONDON, 2003.**

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ABSTRACT

My research interest lies in Karl Barth's analogical use of the trinitarian ontology, particularly with respect to various patterns of divine-human communion in the ecclesiastical context. In Part I, I have delved into Barth's understanding and use of analogy throughout his theological development, especially with regard to the controversial relationship between the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei*. I have tried to bring this issue to a settlement by researching further into the complementary concept of analogy on the basis of the similarity between Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth in dealing with the complementary dialectics for the purpose of setting Barth's moral theology in the right context. Particularly, in the midst of the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, the finite and the infinite, and humanity and divinity, the complementary logic gives us fresh insight into the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ in which human existence has been redefined and transformed forever. The paradoxical twofold nature of Jesus Christ is the one and only nexus for the eternal relationship with the triune God for human beings in faith.

In the light of his trinitarian moral theology, in Part II I have worked on Barth's analogical use of the doctrine of the Trinity from within an explicitly acknowledged ecclesiastical context with respect to the proper reconfiguration of the power and organizational structure of the Church. In the meantime, I have tried to demonstrate an indirect correspondence and similarity between the perichoretic *intra divine* communion and the complementary *divine-human* communion in his theology of ethics. The asymmetrical bipolar relational unity between divine action and human action manifested in the Christian community follows the perichoretic pattern in nature as the two exclusive and distinctive subjects, divine action and human action, are united without confusion and loss of each other's unique nature to bring about a new mode of being in communion in the Church. Barth's detailed study on baptism with special attention to the relation between revelation as divine grace and human response in faith also proves the asymmetrical bipolar relational unity following the pattern of περιχώρησις.

Finally, I have dealt with Barth's illustration of the Christian attitude in the threefold form, faith, obedience and prayer, that provides us with a dynamic and stimulating view on who *God is* to us and who *we are* with Him in return in the light of his three different types of analogy: *fidei*, *relationis*, and *actionis*. Eventually, in Barth's theology of ethics in the Church, I have tried to point out the perichoretic bipolar relational reality in which divine action as the "upper pole" marginally controls human action, the "lower pole". In this asymmetrical bipolar relational unity, the actions are distinguishable but inseparable by enhancing and emphasising each other's qualities and constructing a balanced whole. This relational unity, that is best described in the manner of the Father-child relationship in the Holy Spirit, is a teleological and eschatological movement of the faithful that continues throughout the Christian life until the coming of the ἐσχατον.

OUTLINE

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Chapter 4. Karl Barth's Trinitarian Theology of the Church: The Church Where Divine Action and Human Action Unite Together

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PART I: KARL BARTH'S ANALOGICAL USE OF THE TRINITARIAN ONTOLOGY

Chapter I

Karl Barth's Use of Analogy: *Analogia entis* vs. *Analogia fidei*

Introduction

The history of analogy has shown that the mathematician Achytas introduced analogy for the first time for the purpose of expressing mathematical relation and proportionality.¹ Later, Plato applied the mathematical use of analogy to the philosophical fields of epistemology and ontology to express “a proportion (i.e. a reciprocal relation between numbers or a direct similarity of things and ideas)” and “a proportionality (i.e. the similarity of relations) between the four elements (fire/air = air/water = water/earth), between the four forms of knowledge (knowledge/opinion = thinking/imagining), and between two kinds of being and two kinds of knowledge (being/becoming = knowledge/opinion).”² Aristotle following Plato's use of analogy continued to use the term as “*direct* similarity” and as “similarity in relations” in various areas of concern, such as science, ethics and logic.³ In the fifth century, Dionysius the Areopagite introduced the concept of analogy as something in the middle between positive and negative theology based upon Aristotle's use of analogy as a dialogical middle way of predication between univocity and equivocity.⁴

Since then, the concept of analogy has been widely recognized and appreciated by Roman Catholic theologians as a mode of “predication” since the

¹ Thomas L. Heath, A History of Greek Mathematics Vol. 1. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), pp. 325-327. Battista Mondin, The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Thought (The Hague: Matnus Nijoff, 1963), p. 1.

² Mondin, The Principle of Analogy, pp. 1-2. Also see Plato, “Timaeus,” in The Dialogues of Plato, trans. by Brian Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 15.

³ Mondin, The Principle of Analogy, p. 2.

⁴ Joseph Palakeel, The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse: An Investigation in Ecumenical Perspective (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1995), p. 8. Cf. Hans Meyer, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. by Frederic Eckhoff (London: Herder Book Co., 1954), p. 132.

period of Scholasticism in the thirteenth century.⁵ During this period, the dimension of analogical use of predication has been expanded from the *logical* context (primarily semantic aspects) to the *ontological* dimension of the hermeneutical dependence of *analogatum* (one that is analogised) on the *analogans* (one who makes the analogy) with respect to *being*.⁶ This theory was much celebrated by Scholastics during the medieval period and was known by the term *analogia entis* (analogy of being).

However, this doctrine has later come under fire and is alleged to be an anti-Christian teaching purporting to unveil divine essence with creaturely human language. Among the theologians and philosophers who attack this overly ambiguous theory, Karl Barth reverberates as the strongest voice against the use of the *analogia entis* in the relationship of divine agency and human agency. Moreover, he formulates an *analogia fidei* (analogy of faith) as a counter concept against the *analogia entis* on the ground of the Reformation principle, *sola fide*.

One of the critical questions in the dispute over the use of analogy in the knowability of God is how man can receive divine revelation in the midst of the infinite qualitative distinction between the divine Being and human beings. On the side of the *analogia entis*, it is suggested that by means of inherent human reason alone, man can recognize the divine essence. In contrast, on the side of the *analogia fidei*, the divine revelation is thought to be the one and only means through which he can perceive “who and what God is.”⁷ The points of both sides make sense but only partially, because there should exist an irrefutable access through which man receives divine revelation in the midst of the infinite *diastasis* between God and man. Both human reason in respect of the *analogia entis* and divine revelation in the light of the *analogia fidei* are indispensable elements in dealing with cognition and knowledge of God. It is clear that both human reason

⁵ Jung Young Lee, “Karl Barth’s Use of Analogy in His Church Dogmatics,” in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 21 (1969), p. 130.

⁶ Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. by Darrell L. Guder (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), pp. 271, 272.

⁷ Karl Barth, *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings 1946-1952*, ed. by Gregor Smith (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 209. In the same text p 209, Barth claims, “For the Christian the revelation is itself the proof, the proof furnished by God Himself. The Christian

and divine revelation have been expressed and communicated all the way through human history only by means of human words and language.

As Eberhard Jüngel points out, the dispute over the use of analogy is totally a matter of responsible talk about God. He insists that it is possible to express the essence of the Creator without “humanizing talk about God.”⁸ Both the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* require human language as an indispensable means of expressing the relationship between the divine Being and the human being. It is also a matter of the order of knowing the Being of God and His relation to the creature. Is it really possible to speak of the wholly other God by means of created human language that is fundamentally differentiated from the Creator and oriented only to the creature? Is it possible to talk about God by means of human language without humanizing the divine essence? In this chapter, we will deal with the paradoxical contradiction between the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholicism and the *analogia fidei* of Karl Barth by comparing and contrasting both perspectives.

The Historical Development of Analogy from Aquinas to Barth

The person who made the concept of analogy prominent in theological discourse during the period of Scholasticism was St Thomas Aquinas who used analogy in relation to human attempts to speak about the Creator. In the beginning of De Veritate, Aquinas introduced these kinds of analogy: “analogy of proportion, analogy of proper proportionality, and analogy of improper or metaphorical or symbolical proportionality.”⁹ Since Aquinas, however, the concept of analogy has been developed by later scholastics from predication of

answer to the question as to who and what God is, is a simple one: He is the subject who acts in His revelation. The act of revelation is a token of His Being and the expression of His nature.”

⁸ Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, p. 261.

⁹ Mondin, The Principle of Analogy, p. 13. In the light of Mondin’s explication of Aquinas’ three kinds of analogy, the *analogy of proportion* deals with the relationship between two entities with respect to being, such as “that of healthy medicine to healthy animal.” The *analogy of proper proportionality* can be understood by the example of “corporeal vision and of intellectual vision by reason of the fact that just as sight is in the eye, so intellect is in the soul.” In dealing with the *analogy of improper proportionality*, Aquinas gives “the names ‘lion’ and ‘sun,’ when they are predicated of God. These names cannot be properly predicated of God ‘since they imply in their primary meanings something respecting which no likeness can obtain between God and creature.’” Ibid. p. 13.

relations into more complicated modes of predication of *being*, especially in dealing with the relationship of God and man. In the light of Aquinas' analogy but obviously apart from his original concept, later scholastics have codified and developed Aquinas' analogy of relation into their own version of analogy of being, the *analogia entis*. Among the Roman Catholic theologians who have welcomed and modified the concept of *analogia entis*, Thomas de Cajetan (1469-1534, theologian of the Dominican Order), Francisco de Suarez (1548-1617, Spanish Jesuit theologian), and Erich Przywara (1889-1972) are the most prominent figures. The concept and use of the *analogia entis*, however, has been ascribed to Aquinas and is cherished by most Roman Catholic theologians up to the early twentieth century, regardless of whether these Roman Catholic theologians' modification of Aquinas' analogy has been faithfully in line with Aquinas' original thought and use of analogy in theological discourse.

On the side of Protestant theology, in contrast, the concept of the *analogia entis* in the relation of God and man has not been fully recognized or appreciated by most theologians. Moreover, the controversial aspects of the *analogia entis* have not been scrutinised during the Reformation, either. It is a matter of great surprise to many of Evangelical faith to learn that the leaders of the Reformation, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, did not write any critical comments on the use of the *analogia entis* with respect to divine revelation and faith.

Nevertheless, there have been a few prominent Protestant theologians, such as Johann Andreas Quenstedt and Karl Barth, who have observed and commented on the use of the *analogia entis* in theology. In contrast to Quenstedt who has inherited and modified the Roman Catholic interpretation of the *analogia entis* as a Lutheran theologian, Karl Barth as an uncompromising reformer and untiring renovator within the Evangelical tradition has brought about a new understanding of the concept of analogy and its proper use along with the slogan of the Reformation, *sola fide*.¹⁰ Barth's invention of the concept of the *analogia fidei* in his Church Dogmatics brought about a direct confrontation with the popular mainstream interpretation of the use of the *analogia entis*. Barth

¹⁰ Mondin, The Principle of Analogy, p. 155.

concisely outlines his main reason for opposing the *analogia entis* in the following manner:

The whole natural theology of the Roman Catholic Church is based on the supposition that there is an analogy of being (*esse*). God *is* and the creature *is*—in a different manner, certainly, but both *are*. So there is something in common between them. If I have the right idea of *esse*, I know something regarding God and the creature, and I can attempt to deepen the idea of being and then attain a certain knowledge of created things and the Creator. So in Roman Catholicism man has a grip on God in this idea of being. I oppose *analogia entis* because ‘being’ is a purely philosophical notion not at all concerned with the character of God and the creature. It is only an abstract thing that cannot be made fundamental to the knowledge of them both.¹¹

According to Barth’s allegation, the *analogia entis* puts both God and man under a *common ontological framework* that is directly in contrast to his theological system of the Kierkegaardian “infinite qualitative distinction” between God and man.¹² He opposes the epistemic approach of Roman Catholic theology

¹¹ Karl Barth, “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” in Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 10, recorded and edited by John D. Godsey (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), p. 26. (This book covers a period beginning with the winter semester of 1953 and concluding with the summer semester of 1956. It was published in 1962.) It is not clear when Barth made the above statement but this was probably before he publicised the change of his hostile notion of the *analogia entis* after reading Balthasar’s comment on Barth’s understanding of analogy. Barth himself admitted his wrong interpretation of the *analogia entis* by recognizing the indispensability of “the complementary concept of analogy” between the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* in his Humanity of God published in 1956 (p. 44).

¹² Karl Barth, How I Changed My Mind. Introduction and Epilogue by John Godsey. (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1969), p. 27. In the same text, Barth claims, “If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the ‘infinite qualitative distinction’ between time and eternity, to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: ‘God is in heaven and thou art on earth.’” Moreover, he writes on page 77, “Kierkegaard’s teaching is ‘a bit of seasoning’ for the food, but not the food itself, which it is the task of a proper theology to offer to the Church and thus to man.” See also Barth’s The Epistle to the Romans, translated from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 10. In the light of the Kierkegaardian dualistic epistemological framework, Barth wants to limit and draw a clear distinction between God and creature, in contrast to liberal theology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and secular philosophical epistemology influenced by the Enlightenment and the speculative German Idealism, especially that of G.F.W. Hegel. He claims in support of his conviction that the Bible reveals its own worldview and conceptual framework that is different from that of secular Hellenistic Greek-Roman epistemology. This infinite qualitative distinction between God and man makes man understand and appreciate the meaning and the value of the coming of Jesus Christ and His Incarnation for man in general. As Barth teaches in dealing with the relationship between the law and Gospel, without law it is hard to understand the meaning of “Gospel.” Their relationship is complementary in nature. Thus, the infinite qualitative distinction refers to the dissimilarity between God and man; there should be something that unites both God and man, who is Jesus Christ as the perfect similarity between God and man.

in comprehending the divine being and the human being together within the concept of *esse*. This is the major presupposition making analogy between God and man possible.¹³ Barth, however, thinks that this common *esse* is static and substantial and does not sufficiently describe different aspects and elements of both God and man. Barth contends that analogy is possible only in man's faith by the grace of God, His revelation. For this reason, Barth invents the concept of the *analogia fidei* in order to point out the invalidity of natural theology as influenced by German Idealism and pantheistic Romanticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and which has been closely connected with the concept of the *analogia entis* held by the majority of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians of nineteenth century Liberalism.

Aquinas and His Analogy of Relation

The distinguished notion of the *analogia entis*, the subject of much discussion in the twentieth century, is usually attributed to St Thomas Aquinas whose analogy is very much indebted to Aristotle's definition of analogy as a *similarity in relations*. However, in contrast to Barth's rejection of the Thomist *analogia entis*,¹⁴ Aquinas himself does not give any substantial evidence that supports the mainstream concept of the *analogia entis* as a mode of predication that comprehends God and man together on the basis of the common *esse*. Rather, Hans Meyer clearly points out that St Thomas Aquinas makes a clear distinction between the Being of God and the being of finite creatures in order to eliminate the pantheistic idea of the divine Being. In the light of Aquinas' understanding, as Meyer explicates, "God is indeed the fullness of being. He is being itself, in Him essence and existence coincide. Finite creatures have being,

¹³ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: the Doctrine of the Word of God* Vol. I/1. First Edition, trans. by G.T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), p. 239. In this text, Barth claims, "We do not construe the analogy, similarity, or conformity to God that is actually to be maintained here as an *analogia entis*, i.e., as an analogy that can be surveyed and perceived, as an analogy that can be understood in a synthesis from an onlooker's standpoint. Not a being which the creature has in common with the Creator for all their dissimilarity, but an act that is inaccessible to any mere theory, i.e., human decision, is in faith similar to the decision of God's grace for all its dissimilarity."

¹⁴ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 239.

but it is being of an entirely different kind; they only participate in being, their being is only a faint imitation of the divine being. The relation of the universe is expressed in the words: '*Deo assimilari*.'"¹⁵ Moreover, in dealings with Aquinas' understanding of the relation between God and the universe, as Meyer claims, "The essential difference between God and the universe forbids the *univocal* attribution to Him of concepts derived from experience from created things." And he continues, "St Thomas admits only a *relation* of the universe to God."¹⁶

With regard to modes of predication, Aristotle introduces univocity, equivocity and analogy. He interprets analogy as *something in the middle* between *univoce* (univocity) and *aequivoce* (equivocity).¹⁷ Aquinas uses analogy only as a mode of predication to express *similar relations* between *dissimilar things*, without any signification of complete identification or complete differentiation between them.¹⁸ For this reason, he essentially rejects any kind of

¹⁵ Hans Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by Frederic Eckhoff (London: Herder Book Co., 1954), p. 247.

¹⁶ Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 531. (Italics mine)

¹⁷ Aquinas interprets Aristotle's concept of analogy in the following manner (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. by J.P. Rowan [Chicago: H. Regnery Company, 1961], bk. IV, lesson 1, nr. 535, p. 217f.): "But it must be noted that a term is predicated of different things in various senses. Sometimes it is predicated of them according to a **meaning** which is entirely the same, and then it is said to be predicated of them univocally, as animal is predicated of a horse and of an ox. Sometimes it is predicated of them according to **meanings** which are entirely different, and then it is said to be predicated of them equivocally, as dog is predicated of a star and of an animal. And sometimes it is predicated of them according to meanings which are partly different and partly not (different inasmuch as they imply different relationships, and the same inasmuch as these different relationships are referred to one and the same thing), and then it is said 'to be predicated analogously,' i.e., proportionally, according as each one by its own relationship is referred to that one same thing." Barth also gives lucid insight into the basic concept of analogy when he explicates the difference between the *univoce* and the *aequivoce* by criticizing Quenstedt's definition of analogy. In the light of Barth's explication, the *univoce* means "the same term applied to two different objects, in the same way, designates the same thing in both of them"; on the other hand, the *aequivoce* means "the same term applied to two different objects, designates different things in the one and the other." Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 237. Also see, Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, pp. 12, 13.

¹⁸ Cf. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, translated by fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1911), pp. 158-159 (part I, question 13, article 5). In this text, Aquinas explains the mode of predication regarding the knowability of God in the following manner: "Thus, whatever is said of God and creatures, is said according to the order that exists of a creature to God as its principle and cause; wherein pre-exist excellently all perfect things. This mode of community of idea is a mean *between pure equivocation and simple univocation*. For in analogies the idea is not, as it is in univocals, one and the same, yet also it is not totally diverse as in equivocals, but it must be said that a name used in a multiple sense signifies various *proportions* as regards some one thing; as health applied to blood signifies the sign of animal health, and applied to medicine signifies the cause of health." (Italics mine)

direct and *measurable* proportion between the Creator and the creature due to the infinite diastasis between them.¹⁹ As God is unknowable, it is impossible to establish any kind of direct, measurable proportionality with the known creature. Aquinas clearly presupposes the infinite chasm in the God-man relationship. In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas explicitly claims, “It is impossible to attain the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason.”²⁰ According to Aquinas, as far as *general* revelation is concerned, it may be possible to recognize the existence of God as “The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the things made (Rom. i. 20),” but this is possible only in the light of “the sense of proportion.”²¹ Moreover, with respect to the nature of proportion between God and creature, Aquinas claims, “Univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures,”²² because as he maintains, “The likeness of the creature to God is imperfect, for it does not represent one and the same generic thing. God is not the measure proportioned to things measured; hence it is not necessary that God and creatures should be in the same genus.”²³ It is clear that Aquinas discards any kind of analogy of proportionality between God and man because there is a strict condition in the use of analogy of proportionality that God as the primary analogate has to enter into the definition of all the attributes of the secondary analogates.²⁴ Aquinas excludes from theological discourse the *analogia proportionalitatis* that can be divided into two modes: “analogy of one to another (*unius ad alterum*)” and “analogy of two to a third (*duorum ad alterum*)”, because these two modes of analogy essentially require a measurable distance between the analogates.²⁵

¹⁹ Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, pp. 15-16. But Aquinas, as Mondin elaborates, accepts the validity of an indefinite proportionality, such as man as God’s image and likeness, in contrast to a direct proportionality.

²⁰ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I/2, trans. by fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1912), p. 58 (I/2, q. 32, a. 1).

²¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, p. 158 (I, q. 13, a. 5).

²² Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, pp. 157-158 (I, q. 13, a. 5).

²³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, p. 160 (I, q. 13, a. 5).

²⁴ Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, p. 14.

²⁵ Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, p. 14. Jüngel also explicates this principle of analogy of proportionality in the following manner (*God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 277): “One thing (A) of several totally different things is named after another thing (C) only to the degree that the relation in which one of these two things stands to another thing (a:b) can be named

In the later part of *De Veritate*, however, Aquinas brings about two different kinds of *analogia attributionis* based on a particular nature of *relation* as a way of overcoming the limit of the *analogia proportionalitatis* that requires a measurable distance between the *analogans* and the *analogatum*. In the first type, the cause (*causa*) and the meaning (*ratio*) of the secondary analogate is directly related to the primary analogate to signify not any kind of *intrinsic* perfection but only an *extrinsic* relation between them; in the second type, however, only the cause of the secondary analogate separated from its own meaning is related to the primary analogate.²⁶

In the light of Aquinas' various writings, it seems that he rejects and in fact directly opposes the notion of the so-called "*analogia entis*" that seems to express the dimension of the *analogia proportionalitatis*. Henri Bouillard summarizes and clarifies St Aquinas' position in dealing with the use of analogy in the following manner:

It is only in terms of this relationship that we can name him. The truth of the affirmative propositions which we make in this regard is measured by the 'relationship of the creature to God, its principle and its cause, in whom pre-exist in an excellent way all the perfections of things.' Our knowledge of God is analogical precisely in that it is founded completely on the *relationship*.²⁷

Hence, it is clear that the original concept of St Aquinas' analogy of relationship has not been faithfully inherited but modified under the name of the *analogia entis* by his followers like Cajetan and Suarez, whose commentaries on Aquinas' analogy have had great influence upon later Roman Catholic theology and have even been used outside of theological discourse by Roman Catholic

on the basis of a similar relation of the other of these two things to again another thing (c:d)." In this type of analogy, every participating thing has to be known to each other. However, this proportionality cannot be used in the relationship between God and man because God is essentially unknown, and "relation of an unknown thing to another unknown thing cannot be compared with a known relation." (ibid. p. 277.)

²⁶ Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, pp. 14, 15.

²⁷ Henri Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God*, trans by Samuel D. Femiano (London: Burns and Oates, 1969), p. 107. (Italics mine) "*Hujusmodi nomina dicuntur de Deo et creaturis secundum Analogiam, id est Proportionem*" (ibid). This is St Thomas' definition of "analogy" in its technical sense: it is a *relationship*.

philosophers.²⁸ It is not Aquinas but his followers who have developed the *analogia entis* that seems to express the divine essence, presupposing “the presence of a divine likeness of the creature” or “the partial resemblance of the creature to the Creator”, and that makes a finite chasm between God and man bridged by *analogia proportionalitatis*.²⁹

In contrast to the *analogia entis* that presupposes a measurable distance between God and the creature that Aquinas rejects from the beginning, Aquinas’ analogy is essentially an *analogy of relation* between the Creator and the creature within the confined realm of human expression in naming God. Aquinas’ main interest in dealing with analogy in theological discourse is the relation between God and man in a *semantic* sense, not the direct similarity between the different *species* of one *genus* comprehending God and man together on the ground of the common denominator of *ontological being* which Barth alleged as the evil concept of the *analogia entis*.³⁰

Based on Aquinas’ epoch-making achievement in the use of the concept of analogy in his various theological writings, his followers like Cajetan, Suarez, and Przywara have developed the *analogia entis* and applied its principle in diverse Roman Catholic theological discourses.³¹ The starting point of the discordant debate over the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* cannot, in contrast to Barth’s accusation,³² be found in the teaching of Aquinas, but in the process of the development of Aquinas’ analogy by Cajetan who altered the original intention and meaning of Aquinas’ definition of analogy and coined the term *analogia entis*. In the light of Cajetan’s and Suarez’s definition and use, the *analogia entis* appears to admit “the partial but *direct* resemblance of the creature to the Creator” and “imperfect representation of God in human speech.”³³ This line of thinking that may express a *direct proportion* between God and the creature by putting

²⁸ Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God*, pp. 106, 107.

²⁹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 41; Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God*, p. 113.

³⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, p. 160 (I, q. 13, a. 5); Barth, C.D. II/1, pp. 80, 81.

³¹ Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God*, pp. 106, 107.

³² Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 437.

³³ Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God*, p. 113. (Italics mine)

them under “one concept of being” was eventually inherited and elaborated further by Przywara in the early twentieth century.

Przywara and Barth; The Beginning of the Dispute over Analogy

Among many other theologians who advocated the *analogia entis*, Przywara, a Roman Catholic Father, has popularised and “raised the *analogia entis* to the level of formal principle.”³⁴ Przywara showed profound understanding of the concept of analogy in dependence on the Scholastic tradition and made the *analogia entis* an essential hermeneutical tool of Christian theology in the early twentieth century.³⁵ In the light of Przywara’s interpretation, the *analogia entis* is characterized as a unity “between the mutually excluding alternatives of pantheistic identity (God-within-us) held by the liberal Protestants and the dualistic assertion of the infinite qualitative distance between God and man (God-above-us) by the dialectical theologians.”³⁶ In other words, Przywara’s interpretation of analogy in the relation of both divine and human agencies is identical with the formal teaching of Catholicism (both God-within-us and God-above-us) that God and man exist in a mutual tension forming the two poles of pantheism and theopanism.³⁷ His interpretation of analogy is essentially in line with the interpretations of Cajetan, Suarez and Quenstedt who have advocated the

³⁴ Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, p. 155.

³⁵ He declared himself the first user of the term *analogia entis* in the field of theology in the following manner, “den Werk, in dem sie [die analogia entis als Begriff] nicht nur neu in die heutige Philosophie eingeführt wurde, sondern der ich auch damit erstmals den Namen Analogia entis gab.” However, he was not the first person to use the term *analogia entis*. It is likely that this was Cajetan (Thomas de Vio), who wrote *De Nominum Analogia* and a commentary on Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, in which he used the term *analogia entis* for the first time and argued the validity of its use. See Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*, trans. and annotated by E. Bushinski (Pittsburg, 1953). Also see, B. Mondin’s *The Principle of Analogy*, pp. 36-40 and J. Teran-Dutari, “Die Geshichte des Terminus ‘Analogia entis’ und das Werk Erich Przywaras”, in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 77 (1970), p. 163.

³⁶ Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, p. 9. Also see, E. Przywara, “Gott in uns oder über uns? Immanenz und Transcendenz im heutigen Geistelsleben.” *Stimmen der Zeit* (1923), pp. 343-362.

³⁷ Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, p. 128. Indebted to P. Corset’s insight, Palakeel insists, “Both theopanism of dialectical theology and pantheism of liberal Protestantism stand in the line of Luther’s idea of a transcendent God who is extrinsic to humanity.” (Ibid. p. 127).

“*analogia proportionalitatis*” that treats analogy as a nexus which links God and man by presupposing *a priori* common essence between them.³⁸

This idea seems to lead one to accept the use of natural theology that virtually eliminates the “infinite qualitative distinction” between God and man. As Grover Foley also points out, the Kierkegaardian concept of “the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man” is the one and only *system* of Barth’s theology.³⁹ Consequently, the basic concept of the *analogia entis* that advocates natural existence of a common being between God and man prior to divine revelation is clearly in stark contrast to the foundation of Karl Barth’s own theology. Likewise, as this concept assumes that man has a natural capability to comprehend the divine essence, apart from and prior to the Word of God, there is no need of God’s grace; man is able to encounter and figure out who and what God is by means of human reason and abstract speculation, a view that has been strongly influenced by the Enlightenment and which formed the central framework of nineteenth century Protestant Liberalism.

In contrast to Erich Przywara, Karl Barth, to whom the Word of God Incarnate is the core of his theology, vehemently rejects the *analogia entis* from the beginning of the dispute over the use of analogy by denigrating the concept even as “an invention of anti-Christ.”⁴⁰ Barth affirms that there is no such thing as “*an analogia entis*, the presence of a divine likeness within the creature.”⁴¹ As a reaction against the *analogia entis* and the liberal Protestantism of the nineteenth century,⁴² he invents the *analogia fidei* from the traditional Reformed perspective of faith and divine grace as well as on his own re-interpretation of the three classic types of analogy of Scholasticism, *analogia inaequalitatis*, *analogia*

³⁸ According to the early Scholastic tradition, there are three distinctive types of analogy: *analogia inaequalitatis*, *analogia attributionis* and finally *analogia proportionalitatis*. See, Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* I/1, pp. 152-3; II/1, pp. 234, 238. Also, Jüngel’s *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 270. On the development of the term “analogy of attribution” (*analogia attributionis*) see L.B. Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit* Vol. I (Basel: Herder, 1969), p. 36.

³⁹ Grover Foley, “The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth”, in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, ed. by T.F. Torrance and J.K.S. Reid. Vol. 14 (Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court, 1961), p. 137.

⁴⁰ Karl Barth, C.D. I/1, p. xiii. Barth writes in this page, “I regard *analogia entis* as the invention of Antichrist, and I believe that because of it it is impossible ever to become a Roman Catholic...”

⁴¹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 41.

⁴² Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, p. 169.

proportionalitatis, and *analogia attributionis*.⁴³ Barth rejects the first two types of analogy and develops his renowned *analogia fidei* on the basis of *analogia attributionis extrinsecae* that shows an *external similarity of relationship* of the *analogans* (one who makes the analogy) and the *analogatum* (that which is analogised) “which consists in the fact that what is common to them exists first and properly in the one, and then, because a second is dependent upon it, in the second.”⁴⁴

Barth’s *analogia fidei* can be briefly summarised in the following manner. Barth defines the *analogia fidei* as “the correspondence (in faith) of the thing known with the knowing, of the object with the thought, of the word of God with the word of man in thought and in speech.”⁴⁵ Barth’s *analogia fidei* presupposes an absolute prior necessity of divine revelation in the relation of God and man. Barth claims, “If we know about God as the Creator, it is neither wholly nor partially because we have a prior knowledge of something which resembles creation. It is only because it has been given to us by God’s revelation to know Him,” and he continues, “We have no analogy on the basis of which the nature and being of God as the Lord can be accessible to us.”⁴⁶ The divine revelation spoken to man on the basis of evangelical faith is absolutely based on God’s grace and mercy, and it is beyond all human possibilities. Man’s knowledge of God is wholly based in God’s revelation, the Word of God, and remains bound up with it; there is no other place.⁴⁷ This human faith as the knowledge of God is “an act of human decision corresponding to the act of divine decision.”⁴⁸ Only God initiates and comes to man to reveal Himself. On this ground, Barth questions the validity of the *Vaticanum* that suggests that man can know the Being of God on the basis

⁴³ Barth, C.D. II/1, pp. 237-238.

⁴⁴ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 238. Here, Barth explicates two different types of *analogia attributionis* by the nature of the relationship, *analogia attributionis extrinsecae* and the *analogia attributionis intrinsecae*. In contrast to an *analogia attributionis extrinsecae*, an *analogia attributionis intrinsecae* signifies “the analogy *proprie* belongs both to the *analogans* and to the *analogatum*.” In C.D. III/2, p. 220, Barth defines *analogia relationis* as “a correspondence and similarity between two relationships” which is a typical meaning of *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae*.

⁴⁵ Barth, C.D. I/1 (first edition of 1936), p. 279.

⁴⁶ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 75.

⁴⁷ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 351.

⁴⁸ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 26.

of the fact of existence of God as the Creator.⁴⁹ He argues against the knowability of God without divine revelation as implicitly manifested in the *Vaticanum* in the following manner:

The knowability of God without His revelation is affirmed in the light of the being of God abstractly understood. But over against this being of God a certain being is also ascribed to man, although on another plane and in another manner. In the first instance God and man are seen together on a ground common to both and therefore neutral. It is on this ground that the question of truth is decided in Roman Catholic theology...That is to say you acknowledge the analogy of being, *analogia entis*, the idea of being in which God and man are always comprehended together, even if their relationship to being is quite different, and even if they have a quite different part in being. As himself a being, man is able to know a being as such...Therefore if God is, and if we cannot deny His being, or on the other hand, our own being and that of creation, necessarily we must affirm His knowability apart from His revelation. For it consists precisely in this analogy of being which comprehends both Him and us.⁵⁰

Barth develops the above statement in mind of the writings of Catholic theologians, such as P. Daniel Feuling's *Das Gotteswort der Offenbarung* (published in 1934) and J. Fehr's *Offenbarung und Analogie* (published in 1937) that stand in direct opposition to Barth's own thesis of the knowability of God in the light of the *analogia fidei*. However, these writings do not officially represent the Roman Catholic Church's theology of analogy. Barth argues that it is absolutely impossible to know the being of God on the basis of accepting the existence of God *in abstracto* that only gives, at the most, a partial understanding of God and eventually leads one to false concepts of the divine existence different from the Word of God testified in Holy Scripture. In contrast to the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholic theology, Barth rejects the presupposition of the concept of being as the common denominator of God and man which is understood on the side of Roman Catholic theologians as a nexus for the knowability of the divine Being. He warns against the immediate danger of comprehending God and man together on the basis of being that is common to both because it may lead one to ideas of God in contrast with the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ through the

⁴⁹ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 81.

⁵⁰ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 81.

Holy Spirit and testified to by the apostles and prophets. Barth insists that the Word of God testifies to the triune God in a holistic sense, “God the Reconciler and the Redeemer no less than of God the Lord and Creator.”⁵¹ And he continues, the access to the divine essence “takes place in the act of the divine encroachment and nothing else.”⁵² Barth essentially points out the inability of humanity to know the triune God by means of the puny premise of the existence of God *in abstracto* as the origin and the goal of all things.

Barth thus rejects any kind of analogy without the divine revelation through which man can perceive the essence and being of God as the Creator, the Reconciler and the Redeemer.⁵³ For that reason, the *analogia fidei* expresses the fact that God comes to man out of His absolute grace, and man only receives the divine grace in faith. In other words, God initiates the relationship with man, and man only responds to it in the act of faith; man by himself cannot encounter God or initiate a relationship with Him by means of his natural reason or speculation as the doctrine of the *analogia entis* presupposes.⁵⁴ Eventually, the Incarnation as the supreme analogy reveals that Jesus Christ is the centre of divine knowledge; man encounters God only through Jesus Christ who is the true expression and act of God in human history.⁵⁵ The crux of the dispute over the use of the *analogia entis* in theology is nothing but the chronically debated argument concerning the “*duplex ordo*” of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism’s “*sola fide* and *sola gratia*.”⁵⁶

Concerning the *analogia entis* with its anthropocentric principle, man can perceive and even understand who God is through his natural faculty of reason on the ground of the general premise of the existence of God. This idea begins with the presupposition that there is *a natural point of contact* that makes *analogia proportionalitatis* possible between God and man. On the ground of the concept of being that is common to both God and man, man can, in nature, speculate and

⁵¹ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 80.

⁵² Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 80.

⁵³ Barth, C.D. II/1, pp. 75, 78.

⁵⁴ Barth, C.D. II/1, pp. 75, 77, 78, 79.

⁵⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. by Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 163.

speak about who God is just as man can speak about who man is. This sort of knowability of God is solely based on an abstract understanding of the divine being aside from the absolute and final divine revelation recognized in human faith.

With respect to the *analogia fidei* along with its theocentric approach, on the other hand, Karl Barth insists on the absolute necessity of divine revelation as the ultimate divine grace in knowing “God as the Lord”, “the Creator”, “the Reconciler” and “the Redeemer” revealed in the Bible.⁵⁷ Barth presupposes an irreconcilable chasm between God and man prior to divine revelation through the Word Incarnate. On the basis of the Kierkegaardian view of the infinite qualitative distinction between the Creator and the creature, Barth denies any natural human possibility of knowing the triune God but strongly affirms the absolute condition of a divine approach to the creature by means of the divine creative initiative.

Theological Language

How can the creature know the Creator through created human words? Can one assume that there exists a simple parity between the divine Being and human words when one describes God by means of human words that are oriented to the creature, such as body, soul, father, son, wisdom and knowledge? If the answer is yes, then there is no difference between the Creator and the creature. It also means that there exists a *direct* resemblance between the Creator and the creature. Consequently, God is no longer an unknown Being to the creature. The revelation of God in His mystery to the world is no longer valid. Worst of all, this answer leads to a concluding logic that the Creator becomes merely a creature, and, in the same manner, man becomes a god. In other words, considering a simple parity between God and human beings is “idolatrous.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse*, p. 160.

⁵⁷ Barth, C.D. II/1, pp. 76, 77, 78.

⁵⁸ Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 138.

On the other hand, if the answer is “no” under the presupposition of a disparity between the being of God and human words, it is simply impossible to perceive or express the creative divine Being by means of created human language that is oriented to describing the creature; there can be no means of communication between God and man due to the absolute mutual exclusion between the Creator and the creature. There exists no point of contact on this ground. As Gunton points out by criticising the shortcoming of Barth’s dialectical system of thought, “We need to be able to conceive the way in which created structures of relationality are marked by the hand that made and upholds them.”⁵⁹ Moreover, he has already perceived this problem and criticised it in his book, Becoming and Being: “The contention is that Barth cannot express his theology of grace without some pre-understanding of an analogy subsisting between God and the world. Grace presupposes nature.”⁶⁰

As a result, the crux of the matter is not a parity or disparity between divine revelation and human words about God, but a relationship of similarity and correspondence between the Creator and the creature overcoming mutual exclusion which is nothing but analogy as a partial but genuine correspondence between God and man.⁶¹ Thus, analogy is essential in responsible talk about God. Although God transcends all human attributes and experience and is incomprehensible within the limits of human cognition and knowledge, He humbles Himself to be known by the measure of creatureliness. All the human words that depict God in relation to the creature, such as Father, Lord, Creator, Master, King, and Love are far short of depicting the very Being of God who transcends all the attributes of creatureliness. These words are not about the Being of God Himself but are always analogous and symbolic human perceptions of God within space and time.

However, the God who is analogously depicted in human words and concepts does not stand aloof or isolated from the matter of the creature but is

⁵⁹ Gunton, The One, the Three and the Many, p. 140

⁶⁰ Colin E. Gunton, Becoming and Being (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 174.

⁶¹ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 225. Also see, Barth’s C.D. I/1, p. 239.

deeply involved in the world. As Gunton claims, the Divine Being who is related “economically in time and space” cannot be perceived as “merely timeless and non-spatial.”⁶² God’s economic involvement in the creaturely world is analogously depicted with human words. Gunton’s argument is quite convincing because it would be wrong to consider God as a being wholly separated from the creaturely world.

Conversely, it would also be dangerous to identify the divine Being with created things. However, one should not miss the very purpose of the analogical use of human words in depicting a relationship of great similarity between God and man in the midst of a greater dissimilarity between them.⁶³ Barth claims that “the relationship between what He is in Himself (*ad intra*) and what He is in our work (*ad extra*) is only a relationship of similarity and correspondence. Yet while it is true, it is also true that both in Himself and in our work He is not Another.” Then he continues, “Our view, concepts and words, on God can be legitimately applied to God, and genuinely describe Him even in this sphere of ours and within its limits. For all their unsuitability, they can still be correct and true.”⁶⁴ This implies that both the divine revelation and human words are indispensable to each other in the analogous depiction of the divine Being. More specifically, the anthropocentric *analogia entis* and the theocentric *analogia fidei* could be complementary to each other by enhancing particularities (i.e. the divine grace of the *analogia fidei* and human reason of the *analogia entis*) of each perspective in dealing with the relationship of God and man.

Barth’s Blunt Statement

It is very surprising to know that Jüngel as an eminent Protestant theologian disagrees with Barth’s well-known criticism of the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholic theology, even though he himself is very much indebted and

⁶² Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, p. 164.

⁶³ Heinrich Denzinger, *The Source of Catholic Dogma*, trans. by R.J. Deferrai (London: Herder, 1957), p. 171: “...between the Creator and the creature so great a likeness cannot be noted without the necessity of noting a greater dissimilarity between them.”

⁶⁴ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 227.

dedicated to Barth's theological legacy. In contrast to his usual appreciation of Barth's theological insights, Jüngel even deprecates Barth's scathing comment on the *analogia entis* as "the invention of anti-Christ" by calling it simply a "blunt statement."⁶⁵ He then immediately claims that Barth's pessimistic remark eventually misguided and encouraged many Protestant theologians to misunderstand the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholic theology. Moreover, in contrast to his negative comment on Barth's remark, Jüngel praises Przywara's major work on the *analogia entis* by calling it "a work which cannot be admired enough."⁶⁶ How strange Jüngel's remarks are on the two contrasting perspectives on the use of analogy. It would be nice to know why such an authoritative Barthian theologian as Jüngel criticises Karl Barth's early passionate theological presupposition regarding the *analogia fidei* and favours its very opposite perspective. Jüngel, to defend his assessment, points out and criticises several significant elements that make him stand in direct opposition to Barth's early view. First of all, Jüngel indicates the apparent misinterpretation of the *analogia entis* among Protestant theologians by summarising their general opinion of it:

To be sure, the debate about analogy has usually been carried on within recent Evangelical theology with an astonishing lack of understanding and horrifying carelessness. In the dispute about analogy, the deficiency in the area of the consciousness of the problem is scarcely less acute than the lack of any awareness of the necessity of analogy and of the struggle for its proper usage. The confusing thing about this struggle is that, on the side of Protestant theology, the criticism of the genuinely Catholic doctrine of so-called 'analogy of being' (*analogia entis*) is directed against the very thing to which this doctrine itself is directed.⁶⁷

On what basis, here, does Jüngel allege a lack of understanding of analogy within Evangelical theology? In the light of Jüngel's analysis on this matter, the usual interpretation of the concept of the *analogia entis* as "the horrible phantom" among the Protestant theologians is misleading due to the presupposition that

⁶⁵ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 282. In the later part of this text, Jüngel also mentions Barth's later and matured position on the *analogia entis*. He quotes what Barth later said with respect to the importance of the *analogia entis* in contrast to his early negative statement in the following manner: "We need it, we need it through the whole affair", p. 282.

⁶⁶ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 262.

⁶⁷ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 281-282.

“God, world, and man or creator, creation, and creature are drawn together into a structure of being which then makes it possible to understand God on the basis of the ordering of the created world under him.”⁶⁸ Consequently, the lack of understanding of its real meaning and the use made of it within Evangelical theology bring about the shattering confusion and struggle on the side of the Protestant theologians. To make matters worse, this confusion and struggle has been accelerated among the theologians by Barth’s erroneous accusation that the *analogia entis* is “the invention of Antichrist.”⁶⁹

Jüngel’s verdict on the controversial dispute over the *analogia entis* is that the end result that the critics of the *analogia entis* sought is ironically the same as the original intention of the *analogia entis*. He substantiates his conclusion by pointing out a decisive shortcoming in the criticism of the *analogia entis*. Jüngel argues that the use of the *analogia entis* is essentially based on “the inaccessibility of God” and this view is applied “only too much.”⁷⁰ In other words, Barth’s indispensable presupposition of the infinite qualitative differentiation between God and man can be also found within the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholicism as the fundamental presupposition of analogical talk. In debt to Denzinger’s research, Jüngel insists that Przywara is aware of the complementary relationship between divine agency and human agency. According to Denzinger, as Jüngel argues, Przywara is aware of the concept of the fourth Lateran Council of “greater dissimilarity in so great a likeness” between God and the creature.⁷¹ In this perspective, as Jüngel quotes, Przywara insists as a common rule of analogy that “in the analogy as ‘the analogy of the greater dissimilarity’ the God is powerful and makes himself known who ‘is not God if you do not grasp him.’”⁷²

Moreover, at this point, Przywara gives lucid insight into the superordination of God and his creative initiation by revealing Himself in the

⁶⁸ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 282.

⁶⁹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. viii.

⁷⁰ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 283.

⁷¹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 283. Also see, Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 171: “...between the Creator and the creature so great a likeness cannot be noted without the necessity of noting a greater dissimilarity between them.”

⁷² Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 283. Erich Przywara, “Metaphysik, Religion, Analogie”, in *Analogia entis: Schriften* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1962), III, p. 334.

relationship with man in the midst of the greater dissimilarity between them. According to Gertz, “There is no trace of the phantom of the *analogia entis*, which Karl Barth makes it out to be, to be found in him (Przywara).”⁷³ By agreeing with Gertz’s research, Jüngel claims, “[T]he greater dissimilarity within so great a likeness” is the structure of Przywara’s *analogia entis*.⁷⁴ At this point, as Jüngel contends his point, the inner dynamic of the *analogia entis* becomes clearer with its “complementary dualism” in the relationship between divine agency and creaturely agency.

In contrast to Przywara’s bipolar structure of similarity and dissimilarity in dealing with analogy, Barth claimed on the basis of Kierkegaardian logic of either/or in his Church Dogmatics Vol. I, published in 1940, “There is no *analogia entis* but only an *analogia fidei*.”⁷⁵ In his exclusive logic of either/or, Barth has hardly considered the possibility of an intrinsically complementary concept of analogy. His exclusive conceptual framework eventually led Barth to misinterpret Przywara’s definition of the *analogia entis* that he once called “the invention of Antichrist.”⁷⁶

Jüngel is not the first person who has pointed out Barth’s oversight in dealing with the *analogia entis*. Before Balthasar systematically presented his Christological understanding of analogy in 1951, Gottlieb Söhngen had already mentioned the complementary concept of analogy by suggesting the subordination of the *analogia entis* to the *analogia fidei* in his “*Analogia Fidei*” in Catholica published in 1934. Söhngen claims, “If we do not participate in Christ, then Christ has not really participated in our manhood.”⁷⁷ However, this human participation in His being, as he continues, is “not a participation in God by reason of a purely human ability for participation, but a truly human participation in God

⁷³Bernhard Gertz, Glaubenswelt als Analogie: Die theologische Analogie-Lehre Erich Przywaras und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die analogia fidei (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1969), p. 269.

⁷⁴Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, p. 283.

⁷⁵Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 437.

⁷⁶Barth, C.D. I/1, p. viii.

⁷⁷Gottlieb Söhngen, “Analogia Fidei: Gottähnlichkeit allein aus Glauben?” in Catholica 3 (1934), p. 134. Also, in page 133 Söhngen claims, “Gibt es nämlich echte participatio fidei, d.h. Glaubensteilhabe, [...] dann gibt es auch echte christliche Mystik als Glaubensmystik, Glaubens—und wirkliche Seinsteilhabe (participation in faith)!”

by reason only of the divine power of grace.”⁷⁸ Barth initially gives positive comment on this statement by noting it as “an important deviation” from the mainstream interpretation of Roman Catholic theology.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Barth claims, “If this is the Roman Catholic doctrine of *analogia entis*, then naturally I must withdraw my earlier statement that I regard the *analogia entis* as the invention of anti-Christ.”⁸⁰

About sixteen years after he made the above statement, Barth published The Humanity of God in which he finally admits the shortcoming of the *analogia fidei* and the onesidedness of his interpretation of the *analogia entis* after being convinced by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar argues that the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* are not against each other but are two complementary ways of understanding the one revelation of God, claiming, “Barth’s way of understanding God’s revelation in Christ includes the analogy of being within the analogy of faith; and the way the Catholic authors we have been citing understand the Christocentricity of God’s plan for the world allows the analogy of being to gain its destiny and concreteness only within the wider analogy of faith.”⁸¹ In the dialectical framework of the qualitative distinction between God and man, “God is identified (in all his aseity!) with his revelation. Then the creature is defined as the pure opposite to God and thus is identified with nothingness....here we encounter the unexpected (but also unavoidable!) irruption of a very unbiblical philosophical pantheism (or more precisely, theopanism).”⁸² In the midst of theopanism, God is simply everything and man is nothing, such that man has no chance to respond to God even if God reveals Himself in His Word.⁸³ Consequently, it is impossible to do theology at all within this exclusive

⁷⁸ Söhngen, “Analogia Fidei,” p. 134.

⁷⁹ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 82. By mentioning the mainstream interpretation of *analogia entis*, Barth refers to the implicit view of the doctrine of Vatican I and a few theologians, such as Feuling and Fehr, who advocate the natural knowledge of God (However, they do not really represent the official Roman Catholic theology).

⁸⁰ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 82.

⁸¹ Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 382.

⁸² Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 84.

⁸³ Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 82.

Kierkegaardian dialectic. The final outcome of the Kierkegaardian dialectic in the God-man relationship is a dead end which makes the Incarnation impossible.⁸⁴

According to Gunton on the side of Protestant criticism on the dispute, “Barth here allows himself to be deceived by the terminology into making two errors: first in appearing to accept that his use of analogy is correctly described as a use of the analogy of attribution, although this does less than justice to the range of his theology; and second in failing to see that he does in fact have an analogy of proportionality.”⁸⁵ Consequently, Barth cannot avoid admitting the validity of the *analogia entis* in theological discourse. Moreover, he must employ its concept in order to substantiate adequately his own *analogia fidei* itself on the basis of “his doctrine of the divine becoming in revelation.”⁸⁶

Barth’s scathing remark on the use of the *analogia entis* has been tempered and slowly abandoned through the process of his theological transformation along with writing his Church Dogmatics. Finally, Barth realised he had to withdraw his scornful judgment about the *analogia entis*, “an invention of anti-Christ”, by admitting his hasty interpretation of the *analogia entis* in commenting on Balthasar’s criticism of his misconception of the *analogia entis* in The Theology of Karl Barth. Barth questions himself in his Humanity of God published in 1956: “Where did we really go astray? Where was and is the starting point for the new change of direction? The shrewd friend from another shore has, as is well known, laid his finger on the fact that at that time we worked almost exclusively with the

⁸⁴ Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, pp. 72, 84-85. We have to be very careful using the Kierkegaardian dialectic between God and human beings. The “infinite qualitative distinction” between God and man is not Kierkegaard’s *final* understanding of the relation between them; rather, it is used as a tool for inducing readers of his pseudonymous works into apprehending the truth. In contrast to Hegelian idealistic synthesis, the Kierkegaardian dialectic brings about the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man for the sake of their eschatological and dialectical relationship in the God-man Jesus Christ who is the ultimate Paradox to human reason and understanding. The Kierkegaardian dialectic will be discussed in chapter 2.

⁸⁵ Gunton, Becoming and Being, p. 172. Also see, John McIntyre, “Analogy”, in Scottish Journal of Theology 12 (1959), pp. 15, 16.

⁸⁶ Gunton, Becoming and Being, p. 173.

concept of diastasis, only seldom and incidentally with the complementary concept of analogy. That may be the case.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Karl Barth, Humanity of God, trans. by John Newton Thomas (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 44. The shrewd friend is Hans Urs von Balthasar, a Roman Catholic theologian.

Chapter II

Karl Barth's Dialectic and the Complementary Concept of Analogy

Introduction

After researching into the relationship between the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei*, we have reached the conclusion that these two different kinds of analogy are not separable from each other but are *complementary*. At this point, it is noticeable that the *analogia entis* presupposes man's capability of knowing God who is, in the light of the *analogia fidei*, "perpendicularly from above," and "wholly Other" that inevitably draws the "infinite qualitative distinction" between God the eternal and man the existential. This human capability of recognising divine revelation of the *analogia entis* is possible only by the grace of God presupposed by the *analogia fidei*. Thus, the *analogia entis* is technically conditioned by the *analogia fidei*. However, neither of the concepts diminishes or dominates the other concept; the concepts are not separable, but each is distinctive and enhances the other's idiosyncratic characteristics in a complementary manner.⁸⁸ It is thus adequate to say that man the finite is able to know God the

⁸⁸ The concept of complementarity was initially proposed by a Danish physicist, Niels Bohr. He regarded atomic objects as manifesting themselves in two modes; the modes of "wave" and "particle," in his Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934), pp. 13, 23. Even though, in the light of classical physics, these two modes are mutually contradictory, they were required for a complete explanation; because the inner state of the atom defies the terms of classical physics, a complete description of subatomic realities which might be communicated at the level of classical physics entails the inclusion of contradictories. The use of this terminology, however, is not confined to physical experiments; it can indeed be applied in all kinds of fields. In his later writing on atomic physics in relation to human knowledge, Bohr claims, "A most conspicuous characteristic of atomic physics is the novel relationship between phenomena observed under experimental conditions demanding different elementary concepts for their description. Indeed, however contrasting such experiences might appear when attempting to picture a course of atomic processes on classic line, they have to be considered as complementary in the sense that they represent equally essential knowledge about atomic systems and together exhaust this knowledge. The notion of complementarity does in no way involve a departure from our position as detached observers of nature, but must be regarded as the logical expression of our situation as regards objective description in this field of experience." Niels Bohr, Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge (London: Chapman & Hall, 1958), p. 74. In another place, regarding the general use of the term, Bohr also says, "In general philosophical perspective, it is significant that, as regards analysis and synthesis in other fields of knowledge, we are confronted with situations reminding us of the situation in quantum physics. Thus, the integrity of living organisms and the characteristics of conscious individuals and human cultures present features of wholeness, the account of which implies a typical complementary mode of

infinite through the divine revelation revealed to him indirectly by divine grace. Thus, divine revelation and the relationship between divine grace and human response should be understood in the light of the complementary concept of analogy—similarity in the midst of dissimilarity—because, as Barth claims, “analogy is where God chooses to act and to reveal Himself among us in created form.”⁸⁹ For this reason, even though there is an infinite qualitative distinction between the infinite and the finite, the divine and the human, we can talk about correspondence and similarity of the mutually antithetical in the light of the complementary concept of analogy because, in theological discourse, while remaining dissimilar, any relevant creaturely forms in relation to the knowability of God become analogous to the Creator.

At this point, what we should not miss is that the complementary concept of analogy is inevitably *dialectical* in nature. The *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* are antithetical; the *analogia entis* presumes a type of natural nexus or continuity between the finite and the infinite; in contrast, the *analogia fidei* presupposes the complete diastasis between them in which any type of connection between the existential and the eternal is unthinkable. Each of the two concepts

description.” Niels Bohr, Essays 1958/1962 on Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge (Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company, 1963), p. 7.

In addition to Bohr’s assertion, Max Jammer also states: “Complementarity is the logical relation between two descriptions or sets of concepts which, though mutually exclusive, are nevertheless both necessary for an exhaustive description of the situation.” Max Jammer, The Conceptual Development of Quantum Mechanics. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 348.

Moreover, regarding the applicability of the concept of complementarity in the field of theology, Karl Heim also gives a positive comment by saying, “The drama of man’s struggle to unravel the secret of light has thus reached the final act. In this last act, a synthesis is achieved between the two contradictory pictures by means of which the essence of light is portrayed in virtue of the experiments made. The Either/Or of corpuscle and wave, particle and field, discontinuous given-ness and continuity, is thus removed and resolved in a higher unity. The two pictures, mutually exclusive, presented us with an insoluble contradiction so long as we approached reality with the outlook of the classical theory of knowledge, assuming that we were dealing with a reality over against consciousness. But as soon as this outlook is abandoned, the contradiction is transformed into a relation of ‘complementarity’ between two diverse aspects in which reality manifests itself, according as the observing subject, without whom reality cannot be completely described, encounters it by means of his observations and his measuring instruments.” The Transformation of the Scientific World View, trans. by W.A. Whitehouse (London: SCM Press, 1953), p. 48. The theological use of the concept of complementarity as a logical framework is also recently advocated by John Polkinghorne, a former Cambridge Professor of Mathematical Physics, in his Reason and Reality (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1991), pp. 25-26, 85-98.

⁸⁹ Barth, “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” p. 66.

contends against the other with indisputably irreconcilable perspectives. However, the crux of matter is that neither of the concepts should be dropped in dealing with the knowability of God and divine and human agency in general in the light of the complementary concept of analogy.

At this time, it is clear that the relationship between these two antithetical concepts is *paradoxically dialectical*, similar to the paradoxical union of divinity and humanity in Christ Jesus. As Karl Barth himself argues, theological thinking is and should be *dialectical* as it deals with the being and act of the eternal God in time and space by the existential man. Nevertheless, in this dialectical thinking, man remains as he is and encounters God who also remains as He is.⁹⁰ This type of analogical communication between God and man is possible only by virtue of the fact that the eternal Word of God became flesh. In theological discourse, analogical meaning transcends literal creaturely meaning. This is the dialectical nature of the *complementary* concept of analogy, differentiated from Hegel's *supplementary* dialectical thinking. In order to gain deeper insight into the dialectically analogical relationship between divine action and human action in Barth's theology, it is necessary to delve further into his unique dialectical style of theological thinking that is essentially different from the so-called misappropriated Kierkegaardian dialectic.

Barth's Dialectical Thinking in the Development of His Theology

In contrast to Balthasar's understanding,⁹¹ Barth's dialectical thinking has indeed continued and even played a vital role in his theological discourses ever since he published the second edition of The Epistle to the Romans in 1922. With a sceptical view on Balthasar's claim, Bruce McCormack criticises Balthasar's compelling argument that divides Barth's theological development between a dialectical period and an analogical period. He contends, "Barth's use of

⁹⁰ Barth, Theology and Church, trans. by L. Pettibone Smith (London: SCM, 1962), p. 302.

⁹¹ Balthasar insists that Karl Barth has replaced his dialectics with analogy, though not drastically. The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 106. In order to substantiate his claim, Balthasar devotes two chapters (chapters 3 and 4) in the same book and explicates Barth's transition from

dialectical method would never simply disappear.” Moreover, he warns that “[W]e will never arrive at a sound understanding of Barth’s development by focusing merely on the presence or absence of dialectical thinking.”⁹² Timothy J. Gorringer also claims, “Barth’s theology always remained dialectical.”⁹³ He says, “Barth’s dialectic followed from his subject matter and was never surrendered, though it is true that analogy came to play a much larger part in his theology than it did in the 1920’s.”⁹⁴ Moreover, as early as 1962, T.F. Torrance had already pointed out the subdued but incessant continuity of dialectical thinking in Barth’s theology in general throughout his theological life, even after shifting his major theological subject matters along with analogy.⁹⁵ As far as Barth’s use of dialectic is concerned, in contrast to Balthasar’s perspective, the claims of T.F. Torrance, B. McCormack and T. Gorringer are very accurate and faithfully in line with Karl Barth’s own remark on this matter. For instance, in his speech on being awarded the Sonning Prize in 1963, Barth clearly expresses his perspective on the use of Kierkegaardian dialectic in the following manner:

The second edition of my *Epistle to the Romans* is the very telling document of my participation in what has been called “the Kierkegaard Renaissance.” There were to be for all of us, and indeed especially for me, new dawns with new questions and answers, and yet I believe that throughout my theological life *I have remained faithful to Kierkegaard’s reveille* as we heard it then, and that *I am still faithful to it today*.⁹⁶

This confirms that Barth himself has been faithful to Kierkegaardian thought throughout his theological life since he first encountered Kierkegaard’s writings in 1919. Then, what are the relevant aspects in common between Barth’s dialectical

dialectics to analogy and the mature period of Barth’s theology along with the centrality of *analogia fidei*.

⁹² Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 346.

⁹³ Timothy J. Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 109f. Gorringer agrees with McCormack in Barth’s use of dialectics in his theology, but he disagrees with the use of the term “method”, which may mislead one to consider “Barth’s style of theology” as “an attempt to capture God in a theory.” p. 111.

⁹⁴ Gorringer, *Karl Barth*, pp. 109-110.

⁹⁵ T.F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931* (London: SCM, 1962), p. 89.

⁹⁶ Karl Barth, “A Thank-You and a Bow,” *Fragments Grave and Gay*, ed. by Martin Rumscheidt; trans. by Eric Mosbacher (London: Collins, 1971), p. 98. (Italics mine)

thinking and “the Kierkegaardian Renaissance”? What does Barth’s dialectical thinking owe to Kierkegaard’s dialectic?

We can first think of the particular influence of Kierkegaard’s *qualitative dialectic* on Barth’s dialectical thinking.⁹⁷ Barth as he himself affirmed has indeed remained loyal to Kierkegaard’s way of thinking as his ardent and faithful student. As T.F. Torrance points out, Barth’s dialectical thinking without a doubt owes to Kierkegaard such conceptions as “indirect communication” and “the paradox.”⁹⁸ It would not be too much to say that Barth’s early theological discourse has been heavily characterised by Kierkegaardian diastasis since he published the second edition of The Epistle to the Romans. In contrast to the nineteenth century’s speculative liberal theology, Barth was very much fascinated and encouraged by Kierkegaard’s idea of the “infinite qualitative distinction” and the “wholly Otherness of God”, along with Luther’s similar metaphors such as the “mathematical point” and the “tangential relation” that made him revise his first edition of The Epistle to the Romans.⁹⁹

In the light of recent research by Michael Beintker, Barth would have had a unique kind of dialectic in mind before he encountered Kierkegaard’s writings as early as 1919.¹⁰⁰ However, his style of dialectical thinking has been expressed in his second edition of The Epistle to the Romans along with distinctive Kierkegaardian terms and concepts. In the midst of his revolt against speculative liberal theology, Barth must have been without difficulty able to conform his perspective to that of his predecessor Kierkegaard, who had faithfully kept the

⁹⁷ Cf. Michael Beintker, Die Dialektik in der ‘dialectischen Theologie’ Karl Barths (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1987), pp. 38-39. Also, see, McCormack’s Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology, pp. 162, 163. Both Beintker and McCormack deal with and give insight into Henning Schröer’s definitions and distinctions between supplementary and complementary paradoxes in the form of dialectic. As McCormack points out, Beintker created terms like “supplementary dialectic” similar to Hegelian dialectic and “complementary dialectic” like that of Kierkegaard in dealing with the relation of eschatology to history.

⁹⁸ T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 83.

⁹⁹ Cf. T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Beintker, Die Dialektik in der ‘dialectischen Theologie’ Karl Barths, pp. 38-39; McCormack’s Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology, pp. 162, 163. Barth himself affirmed that “He entered my thinking to more serious and greater extent only in about 1919, at a critical juncture between the first and the second editions of my Epistles to the Romans, and from that time onwards he played an important role in my writing.” in Fragments Grave and Gay, p. 97, or “Dank und Reverenz,” Evangelische Theologie 7 (1963), p. 339.

ethos of the Reformation in the middle of a “bourgeois Christianity” and “Churchiness” of that generation.¹⁰¹ Like Kierkegaard in the early and mid-nineteenth century, Barth was a lone crusader marching against both the intellectual and theological streams of the early and mid twentieth century.

Kierkegaard posited the “paradoxical” or “qualitative dialectic” in the light of the God-man Jesus Christ against the rationalistic and speculative Idealism and the secularised church and its “enlightened” theology. Even though Kierkegaard was very much under the dominant and irresistible influence of Hegelian thought, he defied Hegelian *supplementary* dialectic. Furthermore, Kierkegaard became a sworn critic of Hegel, writing many parodying writings about him.¹⁰² At that time, Kierkegaard intended to reintroduce Christianity into Christendom.¹⁰³ In other words, he wanted to sound a wake-up call to European Christendom in her idle sleep. He was convinced that Christianity had very much deviated from its original faith since the second generation of the apostles. In a similar context, Barth himself recognized the distorted teachings of his teachers and contended against the speculative liberal theology of the nineteenth century influenced especially by Hegelian thought.

Barth’s Misappropriation of Kierkegaard’s Dialectic

Even though Karl Barth himself affirmed that he was very much impressed by Kierkegaard as early as 1919 before he published his second edition of The Epistle to the Romans, it is certain that he had not yet attained sufficient understanding of the genuine aim of Kierkegaardian *paradoxical dialectic*; his exclusive use of Kierkegaard’s terms and concepts at the time was too shallow and sometimes even inappropriate; there was an obvious gap between the full concept of Kierkegaard’s qualitative dialectic and Barth’s appropriation of its

¹⁰¹ Barth, “Kierkegaard and the Theologians,” p. 103.

¹⁰² Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous writings, such as Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscripts, and The Sickness Unto Death, are good examples.

¹⁰³ Søren Kierkegaard, Journals and Papers, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 4266, VII 1 A 74 n.d., 1846.

terms. Moreover, McCormack argues that Barth's "uses of such language in *Romans II* are sufficiently different from the intentions of Kierkegaard."¹⁰⁴

There are various possible elements of misunderstanding that Barth might have had in appropriating Kierkegaard's own unique terms and concepts as McCormack suggests.¹⁰⁵ However, one foremost reason for Barth's misappropriation is that he essentially failed to explicate the *ultimate* purpose of the "qualitative dialectic" of Kierkegaard; Barth put too much emphasis only upon the Kierkegaardian diastasis between God and man, apart from its inseparable context. In this sense, Barth made exactly the same mistake that was made by the Existentialists in the early twentieth century. In a sense, Barth considered Kierkegaard merely a "religious" existentialist. We can easily confirm this error by recalling Barth's famous and frequent use of Kierkegaardian terms, such as "wholly Otherness of God" and "infinite qualitative distinction" in an exclusive way; even Barth himself disliked and often criticised negative aspects of the exclusive use of the terms in his *Church Dogmatics* in later years. For this reason, McCormack believes, Barth's misconception later made him deviate from a "truly Kierkegaardian 'dialectic of existence.'"¹⁰⁶

Kierkegaard's Qualitative Dialectic

It is certain as McCormack argues that Barth made an obvious mistake in appropriating Kierkegaard's terms and concepts due to a lack of appropriate understanding of Kierkegaard's "synthesis."¹⁰⁷ Kierkegaard's dialectic should be expressed in the form of an existential communication; existence is a fundamental ground of his thinking.¹⁰⁸ In contrast to the trends of rationalism and speculative German Idealism, Kierkegaard draws a clear distinction between thinking and existing. According to René Descartes, the father of the modern philosophy "I

¹⁰⁴ McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 235.

¹⁰⁵ McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁶ McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁷ McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁸ Johannes Climacus, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and published by Søren Kierkegaard; trans. by David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 497, 499, 505-514.

think therefore I am”, one’s consciousness is an exclusive way of existence. However, Kierkegaardian existence is a form of doing, not a form of thinking. Yet this form of doing is dialectically related to thought because thoughtless action is not Kierkegaardian existence. In thinking, man can think of possibility and the universal, but in existing, man lives the reality in his thought.¹⁰⁹ In existence, thinking and acting occur together as an event. In this sense, Kierkegaard presupposes not ontological priority but logical priority of thought that is manifested in a form of action.

However, the crux of the matter is the quality and nature of thinking in relation to action as a form of existence. Kierkegaard believes that man behaves as he sees fit. In other words, man acts according to his own *subjective* value or truth.¹¹⁰ This personal value or subjective truth is the fountain of one’s action. In contrast to subjective thinking, objective thinking leads to the objective truth, such as abstract thought, mathematics and historical knowledge of different kinds.¹¹¹ However, with regard to existence and non-existence, as Kierkegaard under his pseudonym Johannes Climacus claims, these objective and quantitative facts alone are wholly indifferent and not relevant to one’s life.¹¹² In this perspective, Kierkegaard raises questions about the validity of speculative philosophy which forgets what it means to exist.¹¹³ In return, one’s subjective reflection as existential truth guides one’s behaviour in existence that is qualitatively different from impotent quantitative objective truths. In the light of Kierkegaardian consciousness, thinking as possibility and existing as actuality collide with each other in a form of opposition between what is and what is not that have to exist together in tension.¹¹⁴

The subjective truths that are inseparably related to one’s existence always entail the illusive absurd that cannot be explicable on the basis of objective

¹⁰⁹ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 67.

¹¹⁰ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 173.

¹¹¹ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 173.

¹¹² Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 15, 173.

¹¹³ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 68, 184, 506.

¹¹⁴ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 499.

facts.¹¹⁵ The illusive absurd is about purely subjective inwardness, personal passion and decision. Kierkegaard calls this illusive absurd faith that cannot be proven or objectively explicable, in contrast to Hegelian Idealism that has understood everything by reason alone.¹¹⁶ Johannes Climacus argues, “As soon as subjectivity is eliminated, and passion eliminated from subjectivity, and the infinite interest eliminated from passion, there is in general no decision at all.”¹¹⁷ All decisions thus hinge around subjective truth and personal passion. There exists a qualitative difference between objective facts and subjective truths. In order to act and to exist, one has to make a decision based on one’s subjective happy passion, faith.

Kierkegaard introduces three qualitatively different stages on life’s way, along with subjective truth and personal decision: the aesthetical, the ethical, and the religious.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Kierkegaard divides the religious stage into religiousness A and religiousness B (Christianity). In the first volume of the pseudonymous book Either/Or, Kierkegaard characterises the aesthetical stage as immediate existence governed by external contingencies and arbitrariness. A whole world-view of the aesthetical stage is guided by one’s basic instinct and the pleasure principle.¹¹⁹ In effect, everyone belongs to this stage unless there is any radical transformation or leap into higher stages by one’s own decision or passion entailed by one’s total resignation from the aesthetic life style.

On the ethical stage, one’s values are guided by passionate self-judgment on the basis of a universal moral rule in dealing with self-perfection. One thing that differentiates the ethical from the aesthetical is the reality of choosing based on one’s own decision.¹²⁰ Kierkegaard explains what the ethically committed man should be through his spokesman, Judge William, in the second volume of

¹¹⁵ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 183.

¹¹⁶ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 32, 178-180.

¹¹⁷ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, “Stages on Life’s Way,” in The Essential Kierkegaard, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 182.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Donald D. Palmer, Kierkegaard (London: Writers and Readers, 1996), p. 83.

¹²⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, Either/Or: Part II, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 176.

Either/Or. This stage of life is not governed by contingencies or contradictions but by universally acceptable objective moral rules. However, through Judge William's statements Kierkegaard parodies the brash attitudes and the over-confident human reason expressed by Enlightenment rationalists and Hegelian Idealists by criticising the notion of objective universal moral rules.¹²¹ In other words, Kierkegaard points out that truth is not objectivity but subjectivity that is not commensurable or explicable within the bounds of reason alone.¹²²

Kierkegaard shows that even though one's life is transfigured from the aesthetical to the ethical on the basis of one's own decision to live by a universal moral rule, the ethical stage is another hollow version of the aesthetical stage; the former is different from the latter only in the sense that it is colonised by ethical demands of society without true freedom and personal decision. Thus, the ethical stage is no better than the aesthetical stage governed by external contingencies and arbitrariness, because one cannot achieve one's self-perfection without the true freedom that is an indispensable requirement in becoming an authentic self.¹²³ Kierkegaard successfully reveals the fallacy of preconceptions of the ethical stage as universal and absolute, and then he points out the indispensable need of religiousness.

In his Fear and Trembling, Kierkegaard initially introduces the religious stage when he deals with the story of Abraham and Isaac. Both *religiousness A* and *religiousness B* are dialectical. However, the dialectical nature of *religiousness A* along with the previous two stages, i.e. the aesthetical stage and the ethical stage, is *qualitatively different* from that of *religiousness B*, which many previous critics of Kierkegaard, including Barth, have often failed to recognize. The essential quality that differentiates *religiousness B* from *religiousness A* is the *paradoxical* nature of dialectic as revealed in the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:1-19.

¹²¹ Cf. Tim Rose, Kierkegaard's Christocentric Theology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 23.

¹²² Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 15, 169, 170, 183, 184.

¹²³ Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part II, p. 214.

Religiousness A refers to common features of all religions; and even in Christianity it can also be present in a form of religiousness of everyone who is not a *fully committed* Christian. Religiousness A as immanent religion is dialectical indeed, dealing with eternity and immanence, but *not paradoxical*, in contrast to religiousness B. Religiousness A deals with eternity and existence but reflects too much on the distinction between them. Eventually, one recognizes the contradiction between eternity and immanence but suffers in self-annihilation and despair within immanence. One's immanent existence becomes the very hindrance in becoming eternal.¹²⁴ In religiousness A, *existence* is emphasised as actuality at the expense of eternity.¹²⁵ Thus, in religiousness A, the more fully the radical breach between human existence and the eternal is grasped, the more clearly one recognizes a deeply dichotomous condition that is pervasive throughout human nature and that finally ends with despair at not being able to hold *the contradiction together in tension*.

The deeply dichotomous human condition of religiousness A refers to Kierkegaard's infinite qualitative distinction between God and man. However, it is the *preliminary stage* to the qualitative dialectic of religiousness B. Kierkegaard's argument is that both aspects of the contradiction are indispensable to human nature. However, in religiousness A, he shows the limit of human reason and logic in dealing with the mutually exclusive and co-exhaustive relation between the eternal and the existential. Hence, in the conceptual framework of religiousness A, Hellenistic dualism is the natural consequence of the contradiction between the existential and the eternal. This exclusive dualism eventually fails to hold the two antithetic polarities in tension.

Religiousness B, in contrast to the exclusive dualism of religiousness A, refers specifically to Christianity. Christianity is all about Jesus Christ whose way of being is of the qualitative dialectic in Kierkegaard's terms because in Him the

¹²⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Essential Kierkegaard*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 239. See also, Johannes Climacus' *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard's Work VII 488.

¹²⁵ Niels Thulstrup, *Commentary on Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by Robert J. Widenmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 368.

dialectical opposites, eternity and existence, must be *held passionately together in tension*, which is the impossible possibility in the previous stages, thus absurd and paradoxical in nature.¹²⁶ For this reason, the contradiction between eternity and existence is a major offence to those who encounter the contradiction in the light of exclusive dualism. The God-man of Jesus Christ is the singular example of the contradiction in the “transcendental” or “paradoxical religiousness.”¹²⁷ The unity of divinity and humanity in the one Person of Jesus Christ is the impossible possibility and sheer absurdness at the stage of religiousness A.

However, in the light of religiousness B, this absurdness and paradox of the God-man of Jesus Christ is the particularity that differentiates Christianity from other religions and philosophical thought. The unity of the God-man in the Person of Jesus Christ presents a unique conceptual framework, the *complementary dialectic* between the opposites that are mutually exclusive, co-exhaustive, equally necessary, and asymmetrical in order.¹²⁸ This complementary unity of the God-man in the Person of Jesus Christ has indeed become the stumbling-block to many liberal theologians as well as modern philosophers. For instance, in The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher questions the nature of the God-man relation in Jesus Christ by saying, “How can divine and human be thus brought together under any single conception, as if they could both be more exact determinations, co-ordinated to each other, of one and the same universal... unless they melt into each other, both systems of ways of action and laws really becoming one in the one life?”¹²⁹ By failing to grasp the complementary nature of the God-Man relationship of Jesus Christ, Schleiermacher rejects the classical doctrine of the two natures of the Person of Jesus Christ that contains “an apparent contradiction” that was eventually “bound to resolve itself into a disproof.”¹³⁰ Encountering the same type of paradox, D.F. Strauss contends, “In an individual,

¹²⁶ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 498-499.

¹²⁷ C. Stephen Evans, Kierkegaard's Fragments and Postscript: The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983), p. 13.

¹²⁸ Christopher B. Kaiser, “Christology and Complementarity” in Religious Studies 12 (1976), pp. 43-46.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), pp. 392-393.

¹³⁰ Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 393-395.

a God-man, the properties and functions which the church describes to Christ contradict themselves.”¹³¹ Inspired by Hegelianism, moreover, L. Feuerbach criticises the God-man relation in Jesus Christ in the following manner:

The divine nature, notwithstanding the position that Christ was at once God and man, is as much dissevered from the human nature in the Incarnation as before it, since each nature excludes the conditions of the other, although both are united in one personality, in an incomprehensible, miraculous, i.e., untrue manner, in contradiction with the relation in which, according to their definition, they stand to each other.¹³²

In the early twentieth century, the French existentialists, such as J.P. Sartre and the early Camus, and to some extent the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, indeed recognized and sharply expressed the dichotomous, negative human condition between time and eternity of religiousness A. Furthermore, Barth himself made use of this negative condition in his description of the relationship between God and man.

However, Barth as well as the existentialists fundamentally failed to grasp Kierkegaard’s paradoxical dialectic of religiousness B, and misappropriated Kierkegaard’s emphasis on the contradiction of time and eternity in the stage of religiousness A that is *penultimate* in his unique qualitative dialectic. They all failed to recognize Kierkegaard’s ultimate epistemological framework discussed in relation to the stage of religiousness B, the *qualitative dialectic* in the light of the complementary unity of the God-man relation in the Person of Jesus Christ. In order to overcome this stumbling block, the contradiction of the God-man relation in Jesus Christ, one has to be willing to accept *the contradiction* even though it does not make sense in the light of human ways of knowing. The contradiction becomes a major stumbling-block for many people as they try to comprehend the incomprehensible within the bounds of reason alone. However, this contradiction is essentially above reason and incommensurable. The crux of the matter is that the contradiction is the *absolute paradox* that cannot be commensurable or

¹³¹ D.F. Strauss, The Life of Jesus Christ Critically Examined (London: SCM, 1973), p. 780.

¹³² Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (London: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 333-334.

comprehensible; there is *no logical continuity* from reason to faith because human ways of knowing cannot overcome the chasm of the contradiction.¹³³ The absolute paradox for Kierkegaard is not communicable information or knowledge in essence but has to be accepted in *faith* with the help of the Holy Spirit that brings about a *radical transformation* of one's view and behaviour.¹³⁴ In other words, from the point of view of unbelief, (i.e., Johannes Climacus), it appears that we must make a leap of faith, although for the believer it is understood retrospectively that it is by the enabling of the Holy Spirit that the radical transformation occurs. The radical transformation brings about a radical change of one's epistemology and action in order to bridge the chasm of the contradiction. Without faith, the contradiction remains an unacceptable offence to those who encounter it.

Thus, at this stage of life of religiousness B, in contrast to the previous stages, the aesthetical stage, ethical stage and religiousness A, Christian faith as a radical transformation of one's conceptual framework from a rational basis is indispensable in dealing with the paradox. This view of Kierkegaard is in contrast to Hegelian thought that *reason* alone can solve all the paradoxes of Christianity and thereby replace *faith* with direct knowledge. Kierkegaard explicates his doctrine of faith in Christianity in contrast to philosophical teaching and rational, immediate knowledge in the following manner:

¹³³ Murray Alistair Rae, Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 166-167.

¹³⁴ Climacus, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 515-516, 518. Also, see Rae, Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed, p. 167. It is very import to keep in mind what Rae points out in dealing with the concept of "leap." Rae lucidly points out that there are two common but misleading interpretations of Kierkegaard's use of "leap." The first is that of Steven Evans who explicates Kierkegaard's leap merely as "a choice, a free personal decision" (p. 166). However, Rae insists that Kierkegaard's concept of leap indeed "*involves* a choice" but is more than a mere choice. The second aspect, like Lessing's metaphor of an ugly ditch, is that the concept of "leap" implies "the radical discontinuity between human ways of knowing and the Truth which faith claims is apprehended in Jesus Christ" (p. 166). Rae indicates that these two common but misleading interpretations are not "the decisive condition of a transition" from unbelief to faith, but rather "the divine assistance" or the role of the Holy Spirit brings about a *radical transition* from unbelief to faith as Johannes Climacus writes in his Concluding Unscientific Postscript (p. 167). I will deal with this subject matter, the complementary relation between the role of the Holy Spirit as divine action and a free personal decision as human action with respect to the pattern of περιχώρησις in a later part of the dissertation.

The whole of modern philosophy has done everything to delude us into thinking that faith is an immediate qualification, that it is the immediate - which in turn is linked up with having made Christianity into a *teaching*, having abolished the God-man and the situation of contemporaneity. What modern philosophy understands by faith is really what is called having an opinion or what in everyday language some people call “to believe.” Christianity is made into a *teaching*; this teaching is then proclaimed to a person, and he believes that it is as the teaching says. Then the next stage is to “comprehend” this teaching, and this philosophy does. All of this would be entirely proper if Christianity were a teaching, but since it is not, all this is totally wrong.¹³⁵

Hegel claims, “Faith is essentially the consciousness of absolute truth,” and “faith comprehends.”¹³⁶ Moreover, he insists, faith “rests solely on reason itself, i.e., on its philosophical coherence.”¹³⁷ In Kierkegaard’s view, however, “to believe” is qualitatively different from “to comprehend.” Christian faith at this stage does not refer to *intellectual assent* through one’s logical comprehension of an intellectual content about Jesus Christ, but faith requires one’s concrete existential action by responding to His paradoxical revelation as the obedient response to divine authority.¹³⁸ As Kierkegaard claims, Christianity as existence-communication “would politely excuse itself from being understood” because the crux of the matter is not to understand what Christianity is but to *become* a Christian.¹³⁹

In respect to the Christian faith of Kierkegaard, as Murray Rae lucidly epitomizes, “ethics (the business of acting decisively) and epistemology cannot be separated”¹⁴⁰ because “faith is a mode of existence which, far from presupposing an understanding of the Truth, is that which makes understanding possible.”¹⁴¹ This line of Kierkegaard’s thought is very similar to Anselm’s famous dictum,

¹³⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 141. (Italics mine)

¹³⁶ George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Christian Religion: Lecture on the Philosophy of Religion, part III: The Revelatory, Consummate, Absolute Religion*, ed. and trans. by Peter Hodgson (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 216.

¹³⁷ Hegel, *The Christian Religion*, p. 216.

¹³⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1967-1978), 1130, XA 268. n.d., 1849.

¹³⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 497.

¹⁴⁰ Rae, *Kierkegaard’s Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed*, p. 159.

¹⁴¹ Rae, *Kierkegaard’s Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed*, p. 159.

“*Fides quaerens intellectum*” (faith seeking understanding, or I believe in order to understand) with regard to the relation between Christian faith and reason.¹⁴² Furthermore, Kierkegaard’s explication of Christian faith reminds us of Luther’s idea of a *nova ratio* that “reason must first be illuminated by faith, therefore it issues in works.”¹⁴³ Moreover, Paul Tillich explains the complementary relation between reason and faith in the following manner: “Reason is the presupposition of faith, and faith is the fulfilment of reason. Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy. There is no conflict between the nature of faith and the nature of reason; they are within each other.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, Christian faith is an indirect, existential communication with the truth that reveals the contradiction placing the qualitative opposites in a unity.¹⁴⁵ Faith in this sense is the obedient, active response to divine revelation by the Holy Spirit on the basis of one’s subjective willingness to accept the revelation, because faith “is not a knowledge but an act of freedom, an expression of will.”¹⁴⁶ In other words, human will and divine will do not exist side by side, but human will is bound together transparently with divine will in faith.¹⁴⁷

Faith, as Tim Rose summarizes, “is understood as being wholly open to the will of God, not through passive resignation but by actively choosing to accept what is given” because, according to Kierkegaard, “the believer is one who truly becomes himself in the divine-human relationship.”¹⁴⁸ At the same time, this active transformation into a genuine self in the relationship is a *spiritual movement* enabled by the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁹ In Kierkegaard’s thought, as Rae points

¹⁴² Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, trans. by Ian W. Robertson (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 16.

¹⁴³ Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), p. 82.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 77.

¹⁴⁵ Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, pp. 133, 134. Also see, Climacus, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 497, 501.

¹⁴⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by David Swenson; revised by Howard V. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 83.

¹⁴⁷ Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 5038, XI A 239, n.d., 1854. Also see Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness Unto Death*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 82.

¹⁴⁸ Rose, *Kierkegaard’s Christocentric Theology*, p. 182.

¹⁴⁹ Rae, *Kierkegaard’s Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed*, p. 168.

out, this radical transformation of one's epistemology accompanied by existential action is a key aspect of "conversion" or "*metanoia*" in a biblical sense, involving a radical renewal of one's mind by the power of the *Holy Spirit* because the Holy Spirit is the One who brings faith to us.¹⁵⁰

The Similarity and Dissimilarity between Kierkegaard and Barth

We now come to discover the subtle but disastrously estranging gap between the ultimate intention of Kierkegaard's *qualitative dialectic* of religiousness B and Barth's misappropriation of it. When he appropriates Kierkegaard's dialectic, Barth refers only to the negative dialectic of religiousness A that eventually ends with *despair*. Unfortunately, Barth never refers to the qualitative dialectic of religiousness B that is characterised as a positive, existential communication in faith.¹⁵¹ Can we at this juncture say that Barth has ever dealt with genuine Kierkegaardian dialectic? Did he ever grasp the ultimate purpose of Kierkegaard's *qualitative dialectic* in his entire conceptual framework? We will investigate now the similarity and dissimilarity between Kierkegaard's qualitative dialectic and Barth's own dialectical style and consider the merits and the problematic elements in Barth's use of the Kierkegaardian concept of diastasis.

In certain and limited contexts, Barth was not completely wrong to appropriate Kierkegaard's terms and concepts in drawing a distinctive line between God and man. Both Kierkegaard and Barth, nevertheless, firmly intended to discard any type of *natural continuity* between God and man through the concept of radical qualitative diastasis. Moreover, even though Barth has not directly quoted and applied Kierkegaard's existential dialectic or synthesis *per se* in his writing, we cannot dismiss the possibility of a fundamental agreement and

¹⁵⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself!* Ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 81. Also see, Rae, *Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation by Faith Transformed*, p. 115. See also Romans 12:2; "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." As Rae claims, this verse gives lucid insight into the definition of *metanoia*.

¹⁵¹ Climacus, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 498-499.

continuity in the dynamics of their dialectics, especially in dealing with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and revelation. As T.F. Torrance claims, Barth's dialectical thinking is very much indebted to Kierkegaard and their perspectives essentially hinge upon the concrete historical reality of the God-man in Jesus Christ, the Incarnation.¹⁵²

It is certain that Barth wrote his The Epistle to the Romans as a reaction against the current streams of thought and theology of the age, heavily influenced by the Enlightenment and speculative Idealism prevalent in Europe during the early nineteenth century. John Godsey claims that Barth wanted to emphasise "the fundamental discontinuity" between God and the creature as revealed in the Bible.¹⁵³ Throughout the time of his lone protest, the Kierkegaardian diastasis between God and man and time and eternity would have convinced and even encouraged Barth to swim against the theological stream of the age. Barth earlier said, "If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: 'God is in heaven and thou art on earth.'"¹⁵⁴ Barth's conviction of the "infinite qualitative distinction" indeed lasted throughout his life, as mentioned earlier in his Sonning speech in 1963 included in Fragments Grave and Gay.

However, Barth also recognized the problem of the one-sidedness of his use of the concept of "the fundamental discontinuity" between God and man, especially in the matter of the knowability of God and revelation as manifested in his Humanity of God. He then admitted the indispensability of the complementary concept of analogy in theological discourse. If Barth had fully grasped Kierkegaard's original intention of the use of diastasis from the beginning, Barth would never have made this kind of correction. In contrast to Barth's misappropriation of it in an exclusively dualistic sense in isolation, however, the radical diastasis is a primary, essential element of Kierkegaard's

¹⁵² T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p.83.

¹⁵³ Karl Barth, Karl Barth: How I changed My Mind. Introduction and Epilogue by John D. Godsey (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1969), p. 23.

¹⁵⁴ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 10

qualitative or complementary dialectic. The radical diastasis between God and man was not the end of Kierkegaard's contention. When Kierkegaard used the radical diastasis, he had already in mind its complementary use in his writing. In this sense, in appropriating Kierkegaard's dialectic Barth still did not do justice to the concept; in Barth's explication of Kierkegaardian dialectic, he hardly mentioned its complementary concept of the qualitative dialectic but only the negative, radical diastasis of religiousness A.

Barth's Own Dialectical Thinking

Barth indeed recognized the complementary concept of analogy and admitted the shortcoming of his version of Kierkegaard's diastasis, but still failed to recognize the subtle but crucial difference between his misappropriated version of Kierkegaardian diastasis and real Kierkegaardian dialectic. Beintker is right in claiming that Barth had his own style of dialectical thinking before he encountered Kierkegaardian dialectic around 1919.¹⁵⁵ His recognition of the complementary concept of analogy is not a correction of his entire theological and dialectical thought. This change is not necessarily a correction of Kierkegaardian dialectic *per se*, but of his exclusively dialectical thinking. He claims that "We viewed this 'wholly other' *in isolation*, abstracted (p.45) and absolutized, and set it over against man...."¹⁵⁶ As a result of his correction, for instance, we can raise the following question: could Barth really discard the so-called Kierkegaardian diastasis of the "wholly Other" and the "infinite qualitative distinction" in his dialectical thinking? Barth's answer to this question is still dialectical because he said that he was wrong exactly where he was right in dealing with the wholly otherness of God from man. In other words, Barth does not discard the element of the wholly otherness of God but this way of describing the relationship between

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Beintker, *Die Dialektik in der 'dialectischen Theologie' Karl Barths*, pp. 38-39; McCormack's *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, pp. 162, 163. Barth himself affirmed that "He entered my thinking to more serious and greater extent only in about 1919, at a critical juncture between the first and the second editions of my Epistles to the Romans, and from that time onwards he played an important role in my writing." In *Fragments Grave and Gay*, p. 97, or "Dank und Reverenz," in *Evangelische Theologie* 7 (1963), p. 339.

¹⁵⁶ Barth, *Humanity of God*, pp. 44-45.

God and man is not sufficient as it is.¹⁵⁷ Now, we need to investigate both negative and positive aspects of Barth's use of Kierkegaardian diastasis.

Barth's use of Kierkegaardian diastasis has obviously shown its limitations and lack of sufficient understanding of Kierkegaard's original intention for it. In failing to introduce the Kierkegaardian diastasis along with the paradoxical synthesis or complementary dialectic, Barth has to take responsibility for his error in handling Kierkegaard's infinite qualitative distinction. If the so-called Kierkegaardian diastasis, with its "wholly other" and "infinite qualitative distinction", were the ultimate stage and goal of Kierkegaard's concept and terms, there would be no problem with appropriating a rather extreme concept of the diastasis as Barth has done. Barth criticised Kierkegaard's dialectic, proposing "a state of suspension" by way of "seeking neither to stand up or lie down."¹⁵⁸ Thus, Barth suggested that Kierkegaardian thought had to be overcome. Barth correctly recognized the insufficiency and problem of Kierkegaardian diastasis in theological discourse in proposing too many negative and ironic aspects. However, Barth did not realise that the ironic and paradoxical aspects were intentionally used by Kierkegaard. In fact, Kierkegaard had already proposed a stage *beyond* his dialectical thinking of the diastasis, the *paradoxical dialectic of religiousness B* on the basis of the bipolar relationality of the Person of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Kierkegaard had a further intention in mind in emphasising the radical diastasis between time and eternity and God and man. For him, the concept of the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, the finite and the infinite was only a *preliminary* stage for further discussion on the ultimate, eschatological relationship between God and man.

Barth unfortunately *hardly* recognized or introduced the ultimate stage of Kierkegaardian *qualitative dialectic* into his discussion of the diastasis.¹⁵⁹ Yet,

¹⁵⁷ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁸ Barth, *Fragments Grave and Gay*, pp. 103, 104.

¹⁵⁹ This is the very reason for Barth's misunderstanding of Kierkegaard in dealing with the diastasis and indicates Barth's insufficient reading of Kierkegaard's other writings, such as *Either/Or*, *Sickness unto Death*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Philosophical Fragments*, and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, besides Kierkegaard's abridged *Journals*, *Training Christianity*, and *The Moment* which were in Barth's own library. Cf. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 235.

oddly enough Barth grasped and has adopted the pattern of Kierkegaard's paradoxical, complementary dialectic and its final goal in a different manner and in a different context from that of Kierkegaard. How could that be possible for Barth? Even though Barth did not grasp the original purpose of the existential and qualitative dialectic of Kierkegaard, he reached the same conclusion as Kierkegaard's qualitative dialectic because Kierkegaard and Barth both developed their conceptual frameworks exclusively based on the once-for-all event of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ - the paradoxical existence of God-man Jesus.¹⁶⁰ Barth developed his theology with a unique dialectical thinking based on the Chalcedonian Christology that we cannot miss while reading his writing.¹⁶¹ Both of them wanted to point out that the Bible reveals its own worldview and conceptual framework that is different from that of the secular Hellenistic epistemological heritage. Most of all, this infinite qualitative distinction between God and man makes man understand and appreciate the meaning and the value of the coming of Jesus Christ and His Incarnation for man in general. The *singularity* of the existence of God-man Jesus that is comparable to the once-for-all event of the creation is the very inspiration for Barth's dialectical thinking as well as Kierkegaard's *qualitative, complementary* dialectic, differentiated from the *supplementary* dialectic of Hegel.

Hegel's Dialectic vs. the Complementary Dialectics of Kierkegaard and Barth

¹⁶⁰ Cf. T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 146. Barth, C.D. II/1, ch. VI, § 28. And see, Anti-Climacus and Kierkegaard's Practice in Christianity, ed. and trans. by Howard. V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 82-83, 133-136.

¹⁶¹ In his How to Read Karl Barth, George Hunsinger correctly analyses Barth's use of the Chalcedonian Christology in his writing. Especially, with regard to the relationship between God and man, divine agency and human agency, the pattern of the Chalcedonian Christology of the God-man Jesus is almost absolute and indispensable for Barth. G. Hunsinger sums up Barth's understanding of the fellowship of divine and human agency in general in the following manner: "Barth's conception of double agency is dominated by the Chalcedonian pattern. This pattern establishes not only the conception itself, but also, by implication, the counter positions to be ruled out. The conception itself posits a relationship of asymmetry, intimacy, and integrity between God and the human being. It posits a fellowship of mutual co-inherence and mutual self-giving, mediated in and by Jesus Christ." How to Read Karl Barth (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 223.

In contrast to Balthasar's explication, Barth's dialectic is qualitatively different from Hegel's dialectic.¹⁶² In the light of Balthasar's explication of the nature of Karl Barth's dialectical argument, as Gorringe sharply points out, Balthasar does not do justice to Barth's unique style of dialectic in contrast to that of Hegel by placing Barth's dialectical style under the umbrella of *dialectical thinking in general*.¹⁶³ Furthermore, Gorringe argues that even though he agrees with McCormack's contention that Barth has always been dialectical, he questions the validity of McCormack's characterization of Barth's dialectical thinking as a logical system with the term *a method*, that may give us a wrong insight into the essential quality of Barth's own dialectical thinking and lead us to view it as "an attempt to capture God in a theory."¹⁶⁴ In contrast to Hegel's method but very much similar and indebted to that of Kierkegaard, Barth's dialectic ultimately requires and points to *the grace of God* and defies from the beginning any type of rational system within which man attempts to sort out all the problems or comprehend the infinite divinity and the absolute truth by overcoming the antitheses and transmuting them theoretically into a higher synthesis.¹⁶⁵

One thing we have to clarify at this point is that both Kierkegaard and Barth use the diastasis between God and man not as the ultimate stage of their thought but rather as a negative condition en route to substantiating and enlightening the forthcoming positive and qualitatively different elements. In contrast, Hegel's dialectic that seeks to *transcend* the clash between thesis and

¹⁶² Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 73. Balthasar indeed distinguishes between a static and dualistic dialectic of Kierkegaard and a dynamic and triadic dialectic of Hegel. However, his claim that the difference between them depends on the degree of *emphasis* does not sufficiently show or recognize the qualitative difference between Kierkegaardian dialectic and that of Hegel. Hegel seeks to answer all the problems within his own rationally dialectical system alone. However, Kierkegaard's dialectic does not provide any positive answer within his dialectical thinking but forces man to recognize the folly and limit of human reason; it leads man to recognize despair as man's universal sickness unto death. If Balthasar had deeper insight into Kierkegaardian dialectic, he would not dare to say Kierkegaardian dialectic is static or dualistic. In contrast to Balthasar's understanding, I believe Kierkegaardian dialectic pursues and deals with a genuinely complementary and dynamic relationship. Rather, that of Hegel is static, doing no justice in line with even the classical logic. I will elaborate on this subject in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

¹⁶³ Gorringe, *Karl Barth*, p. 109. (Italics mine)

¹⁶⁴ Gorringe, *Karl Barth*, p. 111.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. T.F. Torrance, *Karl Barth*, p. 83.



antithesis is rather a grand rational system within which both thesis and antithesis resolve into a new synthesis that eventually fails to hold fast *the tension* between the antithetical elements.¹⁶⁶ In contrast to the harmonious synthesis of Hegel's dialectic, both Barth's dialectic and that of Kierkegaard point out the present dilemma and clash between God and man that cannot be resolved or understood by means of human reason or capacity alone but should initially be recognized as offensive and absurd to it. Kierkegaard and Barth seek to point out that their dialectical thinking reveals the incompleteness and insufficiency of human reason in relation to the knowability of God. In contrast to Hegel's smooth transition to a harmonious synthesis by resolving all distinctions in reason, the dialectical thinking of both Kierkegaard and Barth maintains in faith a bipolar relationality between the two indissoluble, antithetical elements in tension in a radical transformation of one's consciousness that reaches beyond and above human reason.

Hegel's Lord-bondsman Dialectic

The dialectic of Kierkegaard and Barth, presupposing an "infinite qualitative distinction" between human reason and the absolute, achieves its mission by pointing out the qualitatively different diastasis between God and man in the present reality. As T.F. Torrance contends, Barth's dialectic was an "attempt to break the false continuity between God and man," however, as he continues, "there was no attempt to sacrifice either of the two poles of thought, God and man."¹⁶⁷ In the light of Hegelian dialectic, the two poles of thought disappear in the synthesis. For instance, when he explicates the relationship between lordship and bondage regarding self-consciousness, Hegel insists, "The lord is the consciousness that exists for itself, but no longer merely the Notion of such a consciousness. Rather, it is a consciousness existing for itself which is

¹⁶⁶ Cf. T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 83. Also see, Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 73.

¹⁶⁷ T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 84.

mediated with itself through another consciousness.”¹⁶⁸ For Hegel, the self exists only by virtue of being recognized by the other. The one and the other become two opposed shapes of consciousness, but, in the dialectical movement of his logic, the one becomes the other, and the other becomes the one in mutual dependence and recognition.

In the lord-bondsman dialectic, the lord becomes dependent on the bondsman; in return, the bondsman supersedes the lord. The lord exists as lord only because he is seen as such by the bondsman. Conversely, the lord cannot exist as a consciousness existing for itself without the bondsman’s consciousness. Thus, in their relationship, the lord loses his independent consciousness and becomes the dependent one, certainly not being-for-self.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, the bondsman’s dependent action of consciousness becomes the action of the lord. As Hegel argues, “[J]ust as lordship showed that its essential nature is the reverse of what it wants to be, so too servitude in its consummation will really turn into the opposite of what it immediately is.”¹⁷⁰

In Hegel’s logic of the *dialectical movement*, the infinite qualitative difference between God and man should gradually disappear and eventually the two unite together by transforming one to the other for the sake of a harmonious synthesis that is logically explicable and comprehensible.¹⁷¹ In other words, in the God-man relationship, God the infinite gradually becomes man the finite (humanization), and in return, man the finite becomes God the infinite (divinisation), as is also the basic concept of romanticism and pantheistic humanism. However, this way of thinking is in stark contrast to the *complementary dialectics* of Kierkegaard and Barth that maintain the two opposite poles in complementary tension.

Karl Barth’s Complementary Dialectic

¹⁶⁸ George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 115.

¹⁶⁹ Hegel, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 116-117.

¹⁷⁰ Hegel, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 117.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Thomas. E. Hulme, *Speculation* (London: SCM, 1924), p. 10.

In the development of Barth's theology, his purpose of employing dialectical thinking is not to separate God from man or man from God for good. Barth uses the radical diastasis for the sake of unity and reconciliation between God and man in Jesus Christ.¹⁷² However, in this unity, God remains God, and man remains man without separation, confusion, and an indestructible order between them. Barth, like Kierkegaard of the nineteenth century, recognizes the folly of speculative philosophy and pantheistic liberal theology in abstraction that advocate natural continuity between God and man prior to the absolute divine revelation and grace. The radical and infinite diastasis between God and man is not the ultimate stage of Barth's development of theology. However, he wanted to eliminate the false assumption of the relationship between God and man proposed by secular speculative philosophy, before introducing "fresh thinking" in terms of the Bible. As T.F. Torrance describes, Barth's dialectic was intended to clear the secularised and humanised ground in order to instigate fresh thought.¹⁷³ That was what really happened to Barth. Once he drew a clear distinction between God and man through his dialectical thinking, Barth began to deal with a more positive and reconciling form of thinking along with analogy in faith.¹⁷⁴ However, that does not mean Barth dropped his dialectical thinking along with the radical diastasis. Rather, the dichotomous condition in his dialectical thinking as the precondition of the bipolar relationality was more or less subdued by the new direction of inquiry that "penetrates into the interior dialectic of the subject matter, into the logic of the Logos."¹⁷⁵ In a limited sense, as Barth says, the reveille of Kierkegaardian dialectic "has not become silent but has been muted by other sounds and has become a strong accompaniment side by side with others."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 133, 150. Even in C.D. IV/1, p. 186, Barth avers, "We may believe that God can and must only be absolute in contrast to all that is relative, exalted in contrast to all that is lowly, active in contrast to all suffering, inviolable in contrast to all temptation, transcendent in contrast to all immanence, and therefore divine in contrast to everything human, in short that he can and must be only the 'Wholly Other.'" But such beliefs are shown to be quite untenable and corrupt and pagan, by the fact that God does in fact be and do this in Jesus Christ."

¹⁷³ T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 89.

¹⁷⁴ Gorringer, Karl Barth, p. 199.

¹⁷⁵ T.F. Torrance, Karl Barth, p. 89.

¹⁷⁶ Barth, Fragments Grave and Gay, pp. 98-99.

There is no clear evidence that Barth appropriated Kierkegaard's qualitative dialectic in writing, apart from the radical diastasis between time and eternity. However, both Kierkegaard and Barth had the same purpose in employing a negative diastasis in their discourses in order to posit the fundamental discontinuity between God and man. In that respect, both Kierkegaard's dialectic and that of Barth are similar to each other. Furthermore, they sought a qualitatively different stage that connects the opposites of the diastasis. They both believed that this particular nexus could not be organised or established on the level of human approach, but from above. In other words, man reaches heaven not by means of man-made ladder but by means of God-made ladder graciously given to him. They firmly believed that the irreconcilable gulf between God and man, the eternal and the existential, has been bridged in the event of the Incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ through the *Holy Spirit*. Both Kierkegaard and Barth had the ultimate reason for holding fast to the God-man bipolar relationality of the Incarnation. They found not only the relationality with God in Jesus Christ but also the uniqueness of the complementary relationship between divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the Hegelian tendency to dissolve the human existential into the divine eternal, or human spirit into the divine Spirit, both polarities, divinity and humanity, the finite and the infinite hold a complementary relationship in which both polarities enhance and emphasize each other's qualities without changing one into the other, or merging one into the other, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter III

Karl Barth's Complementary Analogy and Being in Action

Introduction

In the light of the complementary concept of analogy presented in the use of the *analogia entis* and advocated by many Roman Catholic theologians, Barth's *analogia fidei* can now be illustrated along with the *analogia entis* not in the exclusive logic of either/or but in the complementary logic of both/and in bipolar relational unity in tension. Barth also admitted the necessity of both the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* in the knowability of God. Then, the next question immediately rises in dealing with the ontological aspect of analogy. What is the ultimate relationship between the *analogia fidei* and *analogia entis* in the knowability of God?

In the light of Söhngen's claim, first, as Barth himself interprets, the *participatio fidei* cannot be opposed to the *participatio entis*.¹⁷⁷ As Jüngel insists, the criticism of the *analogia entis* within Evangelical theology is directed against the goal that this very doctrine is aiming at, that there should be an integrating ground in both of the analogies.¹⁷⁸ As has already been proven, the concept of *analogia entis*, unlike what Barth erroneously rejected before, is not based on human reason in isolation from divine intervention in the matter of the knowability of God. If it were, then Barth's accusation that the *analogia entis* signifies an anti-Christian idea could still be valid.

Therefore, it is obvious that all the research carried out in the process of the dispute over the *analogia entis* must be able to be used positively for advocating the real concept of the *analogia entis* - the great similarity in the midst of the greater dissimilarity. In other words, what Barth himself elaborated and argued against the *analogia entis* has been based on the wrong conception as has been verified by Jüngel as well as Söhngen and Balthasar. Thus, Barth's work on

¹⁷⁷ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 82.

¹⁷⁸ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 281-282.

the *analogia fidei* could be related with the *analogia entis* itself because the two concepts are not antithetical but *distinctive* without separation.¹⁷⁹

The complementary aspects of analogy in the manner of the subordination of the *analogia entis* to the *analogia fidei* can be found on the ground of the miracle of Jesus Christ's Incarnation following the model of Chalcedonian Christology. Barth's use of the complementary concept of divine and human agency (a greater dissimilarity in the midst of a great similarity) of the *analogia entis* can be traced to as early as 1929 when he published his Prologomena zur Christlichen Dogmatik. In this text, Barth refers to a "unity in diversity, as a unity that happens in the act of revelation" in the light of Christology of the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, G. Hunsinger claims, "Barth's account of *fellowship* in particular and of divine and human agency in general cannot possibly be understood unless it is seen that his conception falls within the terms of the Chalcedonian pattern."¹⁸¹ Barth furthermore works on the basis of a partnership between God and man in Jesus Christ. As Barth explains explicitly, God reveals "Who He is and What He is" not "in a vacuum" but "as the *partner* of man."¹⁸² The partnership of God and man is established in Jesus Christ who "is both, without their being confused but also without their being divided; He is wholly the

¹⁷⁹ Barth, Humanity of God, pp. 37, 44. Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 382.

¹⁸⁰ Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, p. 88. Also see, Karl Barth, Prologomena zur Christlichen Dogmatik: Die Lehre vom Worte Gottes (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1928), pp. 224, 229. The Council of Chalcedon confessed the unity of the divinity and the humanity of Jesus in the following manner: "as regards His manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in *two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation*, the difference of natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one hypostasis—not parted or divided into two *prosopa*, but one and the same Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ,...." in John Norman D. Kelly's Early Christian Doctrines (NY: Harper Collins, 1978), pp. 339-340. (Italics mine)

¹⁸¹ George Hunsinger, How to Read Karl Barth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 185. Hunsinger also insists that Barth's use of the pattern of Chalcedonian Christology can be found from the beginning of the Church Dogmatics (I/1, pp. 198-227) to the very end of the series (IV/3, pp. 520-614). At times, Barth explicitly uses "the great pattern" of Incarnation. Ibid. p. 186. In §71 "The Vocation of Man", of the Church Dogmatics, Barth fully develops the concept of Chalcedonian Christology along with its three formal aspects, "indissoluble differentiation, inseparable unity and indestructible order," that Barth uses to illustrate the humanity of Jesus in C.D. III/2, p. 437.

¹⁸² Barth, Humanity of God, p. 44. Before publishing Humanity of God, Barth had already worked on man's covenant-partnership of God in his C.D. III/2, pp. 203-285, 941.

one and wholly the other.”¹⁸³ In the Person of Jesus, God meets man as his “loyal partner,” and as true man, Jesus meets God as His loyal partner.¹⁸⁴ Jesus Christ is the nexus through whom both God and man “mutually contracted, preserved, and fulfilled” the covenant of partnership.¹⁸⁵

Being and Relation

The Person of Jesus Christ is God’s Self-manifestation to the creature by His grace. Through Jesus Christ God has participated in creaturely being, and man through Christ genuinely participates in God.¹⁸⁶ In this logic, Söhngen claims every analogy signifies some type of participation in *being*.¹⁸⁷ However, it is very important to recognize the nature of the *being* both Barth and Söhngen deal with. This “being” in which man participates with faith should not be understood in the sense of a static or substantial ontology, but in the sense of *relational ontology*.¹⁸⁸ The divine being never signifies the divine life in a substantial sense. As James W. Hanvey points out, the word “substance” is “too monistic” and inadequate to convey the being of God. Rather as he continues, “His being is beyond substance and can be thought of only in a radically *relational* way.”¹⁸⁹ The main cause of both the Arian and the Sabellian controversies over the trinitarian issue is the static and substantial thinking of Western metaphysical systems under the influence of Aristotelian logic.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 47.

¹⁸⁴ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁵ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁶ Söhngen, “Analogia Fidei: Gottähnlichkeit allein aus Glauben?”, p. 133. He says, “...hier participatio order analogia fidei nicht schlechthin gegen analogia entis stehen darf.”

¹⁸⁷ Söhngen, “Analogia Fidei: Gottähnlichkeit allein aus Glauben?”, p. 126.

¹⁸⁸ Lee, “Karl Barth’s Use of Analogy”, p. 148.

¹⁸⁹ James W. Hanvey, *Hegel, Rahner, and Karl Barth: A Study in the Possibilities of a Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1989.), p. 328. D. Phil. Thesis (unpublished). With respect to the being or reality of the trinitarian Godhead, Hanvey concisely defines the nature of relation in the following manner: “It is the ‘person’ of the Spirit which constitutes the Godhead as a genuine Trinity: the relation of Father and Son can never become a dialectical relation but is always a relation which distinguishes in identifying.” (Ibid, p. 323.)

¹⁹⁰ Jung Young Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 57. In the same text (p. 213), Lee analyses the dynamics of the trinitarian ontology in the following manner: “The *relational category* belongs to communality, while the *substantial category* belongs to individuality. Since the Trinity is the basic communal unit, it is relational. The early church fathers, no doubt, had difficulty thinking of the Trinity, because they used

Furthermore, according to John Zizioulas, who regards communion or relationship as “an ontological category”,¹⁹¹ the early polemic Christian fathers, such as Justin Martyr and the Alexandrian catechetical theologians, Clement and Origen, were very much influenced by the *substantial* conceptual framework of the *monistic* Greek ontology.¹⁹² This line of thought has been inherited and prevalent in Western theology based on the assumption that “the ‘ontology’ of God consists in the *substance* of God.”¹⁹³ For this reason, within the substantial ontology, it is impossible to resolve the dispute over tritheism and monotheism. In contrast to the polemic theologians of substantial ontology, the pastoral theologians of relational ontology, such as St Ignatius of Antioch and St Irenaeus and later St Athanasius “approached the being of God on account of a *person in relation*, not on account of a substance.”¹⁹⁴ Moreover, Zizioulas points out, man’s participation in the divine being means participation not in the substance of God, but in His personal existence that is constituted in the divine relationship with love and freedom.¹⁹⁵

God’s Being is not substantial or numerical but relational and communal. This kind of perspective is also advocated by Gunton in his The One, the Three and the Many by illustrating the communal nature of the triune God. He claims, “[W]e may say that to think of divine being is to have one’s mind necessarily

substantial thinking, which is more individualistic than communal and more divisive than unitive.” (Italics mine.)

¹⁹¹ John Zizioulas, Being as Communion (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1993), p. 18. Also see John Zizioulas’ “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity” in Scottish Journal of Theology 28 (1975), p. 409. In this text, Zizioulas gives insight into the notion of *hypostasis* (particularity, uniqueness) with respect to Personhood and ontology in contrast to Aristotelian ontology in the following manner: “For the identification of hypostasis not with ‘ousia’ but with Personhood means that the ontological question is not answered by pointing to the ‘self-existent’, to a being as it is determined by its own boundaries, but to a being which in its *ekstasis* (communion, relatedness) breaks through these boundaries in a movement of communion. That for which an ultimate ontological claim can be made, that which *is*, is only that which can be *itself*, which can have a hypostasis of its own. But since ‘hypostasis’ is identical with Personhood and not with substance, it is not in its ‘self-existence’ but in *communion* that this being is *itself* and thus *is at all*. Thus communion does not threaten personal particularity; it is constitutive of it.”

¹⁹² Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p. 16.

¹⁹³ Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p. 40.

¹⁹⁴ Zizioulas, Being as Communion, pp. 16, 42.

¹⁹⁵ Zizioulas, Being as Communion, pp. 39, 44, 46, 50. He claims the divine communion as the divine mode of existence is “a product of freedom (p. 44)”, and “love as God’s mode of existence” is “identified with ontological freedom (p. 44).”

drawn to the three persons, to think of the three to be led ineluctably to a concept of shared, relational, being.”¹⁹⁶ This line of perspective is not foreign to the church theologian Karl Barth himself or his own dogmatic theology. His theology is essentially oriented not to an abstract truth about God and man but to “the prayer and the sermon” taking “only the form of dialogue” within the ecclesial community.¹⁹⁷ In fact, in debt to Eastern patristic theology and Chalcedonian Christology, Barth has recognized and developed the dynamic relational ontology between divine agency and human agency in the Church Dogmatics in the manner of an analogy of relation (*analogia relationis*).¹⁹⁸

Barth’s *Analogia Relationis* and *Analogia Actionis*

According to J.Y. Lee’s meticulous research on Barth’s use of analogy, Barth tends to use the term *analogia relationis* mostly “in the context of ontological aspects, especially in the doctrine of creation of his Church Dogmatics Volume III, and Barth’s use of this analogy of relation from that point seems to presuppose ontological necessity.”¹⁹⁹ For Barth, Jesus Christ as the complementary being of both divinity and humanity within His own Person, is the indispensable figure bridging the infinite qualitative chasm between the Being of God and that of man.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Gunton, The One, the Three and the Many, p. 214.

¹⁹⁷ Barth, Humanity of God, p. 57. Barth published a Christian Dogmatics in Outline as an antecedent of the Church Dogmatics. However, he published the first two volumes of the Church Dogmatics as a retraction of his Christian Dogmatics in Outline. His intention of using “Church” instead of “Christian” is clearly manifested in the very beginning of his C.D. I/1 (p. 3). Barth states, “In substituting the word *Church* for *Christian* in the title, I have tried to set a good example of restraint in the lighthearted use of the great word “Christian” against which I have protested. But materially I have also tried to show that from the very outset dogmatics is not a free science. *It is bound to the sphere of the Church, where alone it is possible and meaningful.*” (Italics mine) See, also, Bruce L. McCormack’s Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology, pp. 441-448. In these pages, McCormack explicitly illustrates the transition from Barth’s Christian Dogmatics in Outline to the Church Dogmatics under the title of “Why ‘Church’ Dogmatics?”

¹⁹⁸ Barth, C.D. III/2, §45, “Man in His Determination as the Covenant-Partner of God,” pp. 203-324. Also see, T.F. Torrance, “Karl Barth and Patristic Theology,” in Theology Beyond Christendom (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1986), pp. 224-225.

¹⁹⁹ Lee, “Karl Barth’s Use of Analogy,” pp. 141-142.

²⁰⁰ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 220.

Barth's *analogia relationis* reflects Dietrich Bonhoeffer's I-Thou concept of *imago Dei* described in his Creation and Fall.²⁰¹ Bonhoeffer uses the term *analogia relationis* for the first time when he illustrates "the likeness, the analogy of man to God."²⁰² He insists, "Man in duality - man and woman - is brought into the world of the fixed and the living in his likeness to God."²⁰³ The relationship that happens between man and woman is similar to the relationship within the triune being of God. He thinks that the divine *image* and *likeness* mentioned in Genesis 1:26 is not a *substantial* or *logical* similarity but only a similarity of this intra-divine *relationship*.²⁰⁴ This man and woman relationship mentioned in Genesis 1:26 is the very image and the likeness of *the divine way of being*. In other words, this I-Thou relationship as the human way of being reflects the divine way of being like a mirror. Consequently, there is no "being" without the I-Thou relationship. In the same line of thought, in recent years, John Zizioulas gives clearer insight into the concept of being in his Being as Communion. He affirms in the light of the Cappadocian fathers, "The being of God is a *relational being*: without the relational concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of the being of God."²⁰⁵ The concept of being itself is possible only within the relationship of ecclesial communion as "an image and likeness of God."²⁰⁶

In his Church Dogmatics III/2, Barth for the first time introduces the concept of the *analogia relationis* in the ecclesial context while he explicates the being of Jesus Christ as the reconciling image of God in the midst of the chasm between the being of God and that of man. According to Barth's own definition, the *analogia relationis* presents a correspondence and similarity between the "relationship within the being of God on the one hand" and the relationship

²⁰¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959). See, Mondin, Principle of Analogy, pp. 164-165; Henry Chavannes, The Analogy between God and the World in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, trans. by William Lumley (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), pp. 186-197; Barth's C.D. III/1, pp. 194-197.

²⁰² Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, p. 37.

²⁰³ Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, p. 37.

²⁰⁴ Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, p. 37.

²⁰⁵ Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p. 17.

²⁰⁶ Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p. 50.

“between the being of God and that of man on the other.”²⁰⁷ In other words, with the concept of the *analogia relationis*, Barth wants to demonstrate a correspondence and similarity between the *intra divine* communion and the *divine-human* communion. As Barth deliberately points out, the humanity of Jesus as the original image of God in the outer realm of the divine work “does not present God in Himself and in His relation to Himself, but in His relation to the reality distinct from Himself. In it we have to do with God and man rather than God and God.”²⁰⁸ For this reason, Jesus Christ as the image of God reveals to man the perfect “*correspondence and similarity*” rather than direct “*identity*” between the being of God and that of man.²⁰⁹ Thus, an *analogous* relationship between the inner divine communion and divine-human communion is possible only through Jesus Christ. Without Him, there can be no similarity or correspondence between the two kinds of relationships.

God’s Being: Word, Relation and Action

Barth’s earlier reason for rejecting the *analogia entis*, before admitting the shortcoming of the *analogia fidei*, was that he thought that the *analogia entis* was entirely based on ideas relevant to the false God in abstraction and mere human speculation of natural theology in a static and substantial sense.²¹⁰ By excluding the God of mere abstraction, he develops the *analogia fidei* and the *analogia relationis* on the ground of the revealed Christian concept of the triune God in the Bible. Reckoning Jesus Christ the Incarnated Word of God as the image of God, Barth himself also declares, “I start with the Word, with Christ. I write in terms of the Bible.”²¹¹ However, what does Barth really mean by “the Word” and “in terms of the Bible” that is so frequently mentioned in the development of his theology? One thing for sure the *analogia relationis* reflects is that “the Word of God” and His “revelation” are never static or substantial in the form of a datum or

²⁰⁷ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 220. Also see, Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 219.

²⁰⁹ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 219.

²¹⁰ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 239.

²¹¹ Barth, “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” pp. 23-24.

proposition. These are dynamic and active in relation to the world and new every morning to us.

Before delving into Barth's understanding and use of "the Word" and "revelation" in his theological discourse, I want to introduce briefly T. Boman's comparative study of Hebrew and Greek thought that gives deeper insight into the original meaning and use of "word" in the biblical context. First of all, it would be helpful to get some idea of time and being implied in Hebrew copula, *hayah* (היה) that means "to be" or "to become" designating existence in a dynamic sense.²¹² Boman illustrates היה in the following manner:

The *hayah* designates existence; only that to which one can attribute a *hayah* is effective. We have seen time and again that the effective expresses itself in activity, so existence is identical with effectiveness: it is not at rest but is dynamic. This is especially clear in the existence of God...The Israelite knows that above all others Jahveh is; he is the sum of all dynamic existence and the source and creator of it. This lies in the embattled verse: '*ehyeh'asher'ehyeh*—I am who I am (Ex. 3:14)...[T]o Jahveh is ascribed an unalterable (i.e. eternal) *hayah*, and this *hayah* is a dynamic, energetic, effective, personal being "who carries out his will and achieves his purpose" ...²¹³

In the light of Boman's research, "to be" in Hebrew does not refer to a mere static existence, but it signifies, though not *exclusively* as Barr points out, action-oriented existence of anything that exists in the universe. This dynamic nature of being in the Bible, as Barth himself also insists, is more specific in expressing the activity and existence of God. From the beginning of Genesis 1:1,

²¹²William B. Coppes, "hāyâ," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 491. In *Semantics of Biblical Language*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), James Barr gives critical comments on Throief Boman's study on the exclusive use of the verb "*hayah* (היה)." Especially, in chapter 4: "Verb, Action, and Time," pp. 47-88, Barr criticises a few critical and dubious aspects of Boman's study on the use of the verb, *hayah* (היה), such as the absence of the function of copula in his explication of the verb and the coordination of the verb with other terms in the process of translation into English. However, even in the light of his own criticism on Boman's work on *hayah* (היה), Barr himself does not completely exclude one of the functions of the verb as "the existential" by saying, "We are not on the other hand justified in removing *hayah* altogether from the sphere of what is relevant to English 'is' and making it equivalent (say) to English 'become.'" (p. 59.) Barr points out the unbalanced academic approach of Boman's study on *hayah* (היה) with which Boman tries to correlate the presence or absence of static or dynamic thinking with the characteristics of the entire verb system of the Hebrew language.

²¹³ Throief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek* (London: SCM Press, 1960), pp. 48, 49.

God is described as the Creator in action. Moreover, with respect to the issue of the relation of being and action, Zizioulas also thinks that God's being should be understood in terms of His act manifested in the economic divine involvement in the world.²¹⁴ Man cannot know God in a static sense by identifying Him with "a sum or content of event, act, or life generally," but as Barth claims, "as event, as act and as life" on the ground of His revelation.²¹⁵ God exists always in His activity. He reveals Himself only in action. Who and what God is can be known only in His action. God's being in action is also manifested in the creature; the created being that God created also exists only in action as the very image and likeness of God Himself.

This action-oriented nature of "being" can also be found in Barth's understanding of the *imago Dei*. Barth insists, "[I]mago Dei is the relation of man and woman. Man is created in an I-Thou relationship similar to the I-Thou relation in God Himself."²¹⁶ According to Barth, the *imago Dei* as the man-woman relation is "the fundamental form of human co-existence....I would prefer to explain the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 as a picture of God in relation to Israel. This relation is a kind of marriage. This is a prefiguring of how God acts with His people and is later continued in the relation between Jesus Christ and the Church."²¹⁷ For this reason, there would be no difficulty in saying that the action occurs as an event of relationship between I and Thou which is the mode of being and co-existence both of God and man. In other words, being as action is manifested in relationship: (being=action=relation). In this perspective, it would be adequate to say that each of the *analogia entis*, the *analogia relationis* and the *analogia actionis* implies the same meaning but with its specific and distinctive emphasis and context.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ In the light of the tradition of the Greek Fathers, Zizioulas also makes a similar statement that God's Being is "identical with an act of communion." *Being as Communion*, p. 44.

²¹⁵ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 264.

²¹⁶ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 41.

²¹⁷ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 96.

²¹⁸ The reality manifested in analogy is essentially multidimensional. In contrast, human language as a means of analogy is mono-dimensional. In order to express the multidimensional aspects of the reality and being, human language has to be used repeatedly with special emphasis on each aspect.

The action-oriented thinking is more clearly expressed in the Hebrew noun, *dabar* (דבר).²¹⁹ As Boman explicates, דבר in the biblical context is originated from the verb *diber* (דיבר) which plainly means “speak,” and, in a more archaic sense, it also means “to be behind and drive forward” portraying “the function of speaking.”²²⁰ Due to its dynamic etymological origin from the verb, the noun דבר entails both “word and “deed” so that the word of man directly manifests his intrinsic will and essence by identifying with his existential deeds.²²¹ In this perspective, one’s word concretely refers to one’s action and deed in practice. Then, if we switch “the Word” with “deed” in the first verse of the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” we can read, “In the beginning was the Deed, and the Deed was with God, and the Deed was God.”²²²

Boman argues that the Greek term λόγος in the New Testament is “a poor translation for the Hebrew דבר, because for us ‘word’ never includes deed within it.”²²³ Boman points out that the translation of the Hebrew term דבר into the Greek word λόγος renders only one part of the content of each word, unfortunately, without rendering the most important facet of דבר, *deed*, as practical proof. According to Boman, the decisive distinction between דבר and λόγος “is hidden within the very term ‘word’” which is “the point of intersection between two entirely different ways of conceiving of the highest mental life, a fact that can be pointed up by means of the following diagram.”²²⁴

²¹⁹ It is true that Boman shows lack of balance and obscurity in explicating the use of the verb, *hayah*, היה, in relation to the verb system of the Hebrew language as Barr criticizes. However, Barr does not make any objection to or criticism of Boman’s study on the critical difference between the Hebrew term, דבר, and the Greek term, λόγος.

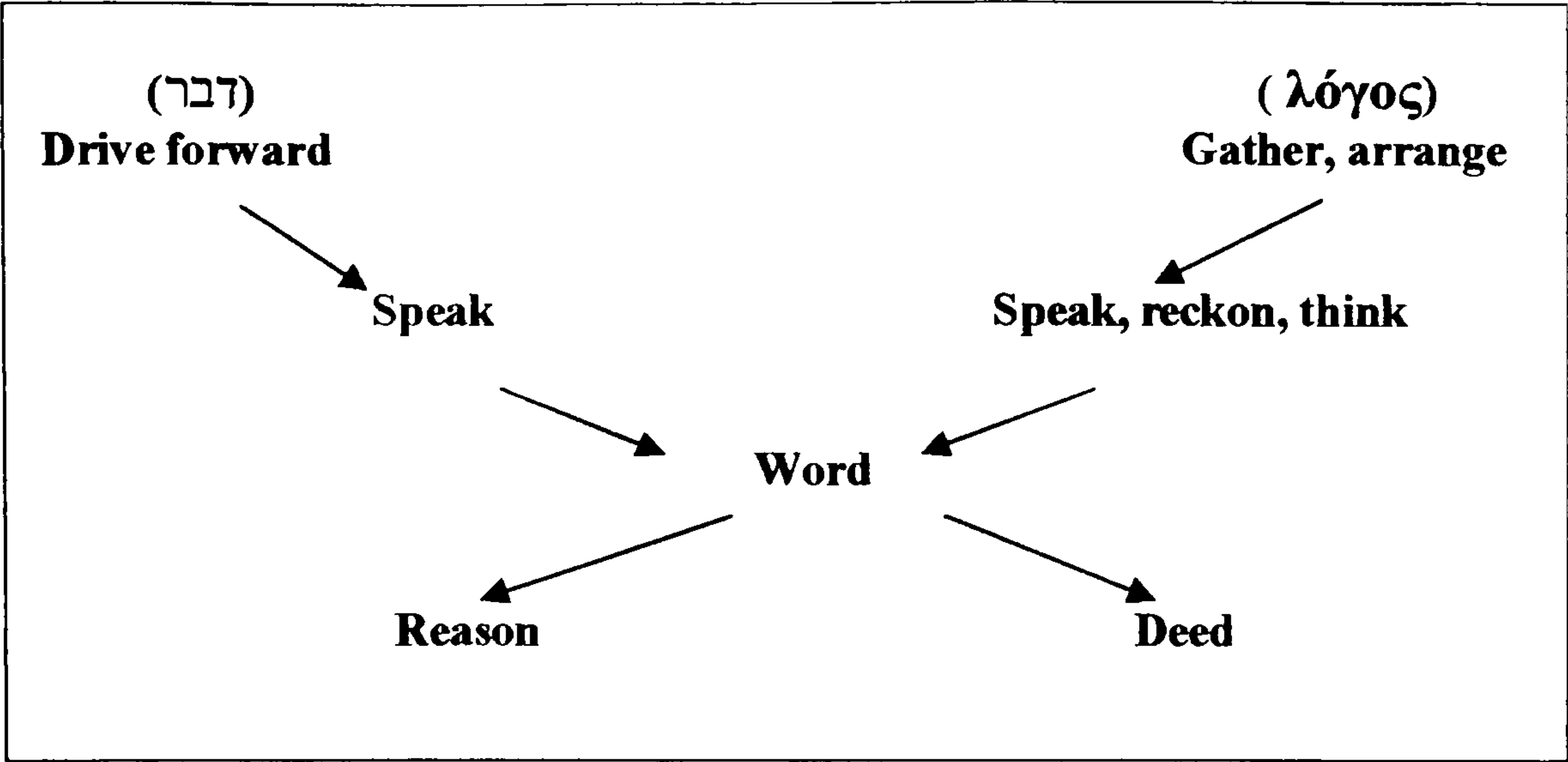
²²⁰ Boman, *Hebrew Thought*, p. 65. *Dabar* implies several kinds of meanings; *language*: Genesis 11:1, Psalms 19:3; *Word*: Gen. 34:18, Exodus 4:15; *Deed*: Genesis 18:14, Exodus 2:14; *Commandment*: Genesis 44:2, Numbers 30:1; *Order*: Jeremiah 10:7, Leviticus 36:6; *Thing*: Leviticus 31:23; *Achievement*: Genesis 15: 7, 23; *Activity*: Chronicles 1 24:29, Chronicles 2 12:15.

²²¹ Boman, *Hebrew Thought*, p. 65.

²²² Bultmann refers to *Faust* in order to explain Goethe’s intention of choosing the term “deed (*Tat*)” instead of “thought (*Sinn*) or power (*Kraft*)” when he questions the intelligible beginning of the world in the light of the Gospel of John. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. by G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), p. 36.

²²³ Boman, *Hebrew Thought*, p. 65.

²²⁴ Boman, *Hebrew Thought*, p. 68.



As the diagram shows, דבר on the ground of the epistemological framework of the Hebrew is essentially different from that of the Greek which is also mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1: 22, “Jews demand miraculous signs (deeds) and Greeks look for wisdom (idea).”²²⁵ In addition, Rudolf Bultmann has already claimed that the Israelite concept of the *word* manifested in the Bible is the very opposite of that of Greek.²²⁶ The Hebrew term דבר as word essentially implies *action-oriented deed* in the manner of human language. In contrast, the Greek term λόγος renders *abstractive and speculative reason* as embodying a speculative idea.

Apart from Boman’s own thesis, we can also easily figure out the difference between דבר and λόγος by comparing simply λόγος (word) with ἔργον (deed) in a Greek lexicon. According to Walter Bauer’s A Greek-English Lexicon, λόγος with its various meanings (i.e. speaking, word, computation, reckoning, and reason) is used in the Bible in contrast to ἔργον (deed, action, manifestation, practical proof, accomplishment, work and task).²²⁷ The Hebrew term דבר (*dabar*) is used in the context of act and deeds. For example, in Isaiah 55:10-11, “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed

²²⁵ New International Version (NIV).

²²⁶ Bultmann, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, pp. 19-36 (especially, pp. 20, 28, 30, and 36).

²²⁷ Walter Bauer, A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature, trans. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Second edition revised

for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my *word* that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”²²⁸ These verses coherently demonstrate the original meaning of דבר that connotes practical action and deed by driving forward that which is behind.²²⁹ The divine word is described as something that *proceeds* from God’s mouth followed by its faithful *accomplishment* of His will. This Hebrew word is not static or speculative but always dynamic and existential. Unlike the Greek term, λόγος, it is certain that the use of this word דבר directly related to both noetic and ontic dimensions.

Karl Barth, whose theology is always oriented to the Word of God in terms of the biblical context, never fails to grasp this dynamic perspective of being and word in the Old Testament. It seems that he has already grasped the uniqueness of the Israelite conceptual framework manifested in the terms הֵיכָה and דבר of the Old Testament, as clearly manifested in his action-oriented *analogia fidei* and *analogia relationis*. It is not difficult to recognize that Barth’s theological insight is in accord with Boman’s thesis concerning both הֵיכָה (being) and דבר (word) in the Bible. It is also very evangelical to believe that both word and being in the biblical context should be interpreted from the perspective of dynamic action and deed occurring in the event of revelation. Barth’s previous reason for rejecting the so-called *analogia entis* was that he thought of this analogy in the sense of stagnant and substantial existence. However, as long as being signifies action-oriented existence along with divine grace in faith, the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* and the *analogia relationis* and the *analogia actionis* are all complementary to each other in the matter of the knowability of God. Moreover, the word דבר in the Bible always entails an eventful and practical deed that differentiates its meaning and use from that of λόγος of mere speculation and reason signifying an idea.

and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Fredrick W. Danker from Walter Bauer’s fifth edition, 1958. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 477 (on λόγος) and p. 307 (on ἔργον).

²²⁸ New International Version. (Italics mine)

²²⁹ Boman, *Hebrew Thought*, p. 65. Boman is also well aware of the analogical use of the word *dabar* in the Bible. He says in p. 66, “The ‘effective word’ of Jahveh is just as dynamic as

Barth's analogy is based on the Word of God revealed in the Bible, not on the ground of logical human speculation or the natural faculty of reason. Rather, as Hanvey points out, "Revelation is not a 'concept' it is an *Act* in which God reveals Himself as Lord."²³⁰ The Word of God that proceeds from the mouth of God fulfils His will and purpose without failing. To put it in another way in terms of דבר, the Word of God is the very *work* and *deed* of God that accomplishes God's will and purpose in reality. As Barth insists, "Christian doctrine, if it is to merit its name and if it is to build up the Christian Church in the world as she must needs be built up, has to be exclusively and conclusively the doctrine of Jesus Christ—of *Jesus Christ as the living Word of God spoken to us men*."²³¹ This Word of God as dynamic divine action and deed is also nothing but the very revelation of God. Excluding any type of abstractive thought or stagnant existence but being in accord with the original Hebrew term, דבר and היה, Barth demonstrates his understanding and use of revelation spoken to man. He concisely explicates his understanding of revelation in the Christian sense in the following manner:

1. A revelation which man needs not relatively, but absolutely, for his very life and being as man, a revelation without which he would not in fact be man at all, a revelation which decides being and non-being: in other words, one which man cannot please himself whether he accepts or not.
2. Revelation in the Christian sense is an affirmation of man, however much it may be bound up with threats and judgment.
3. Revelation in the Christian sense is a revelation which was completely new to man yesterday and the day before yesterday, which is completely new to him today and will be new again tomorrow. It is absolute, not relative.
4. Revelation in the Christian sense is a revelation which comes to all men with equal strangeness from outside, but which concerns all men with equal intimacy.

the word of the other ancient original gods, yet it is not on the physical, biological, or animal level and must be understood in analogy with the highest human function."

²³⁰ Hanvey, Hegel, Rahner, and Karl Barth, p. 223. (Italics mine) Cf. Barth, C.D. I/1, pp. 295-297.

²³¹ Barth, How I changed My Mind, p. 43. (Italics mine)

5. Revelation in the Christian sense is not contingent.
6. Revelation is the revelation of a reality outside man.
7. Revelation cannot be capitalised.
8. Revelation in the Christian sense is a revelation which is complete and final, which fulfils past, present and future, which fulfils time itself.
9. Revelation in the Christian sense is not an object which man can observe from outside; it is rather one which takes possession of man, seizes hold of him and calls him to action. It is anything but merely speculative.
10. We may sum up what has been said so far by saying that revelation in the Christian sense is the self-revelation of the Creator of all that is, the self-revelation of the Lord of all being.²³²

The revelation of God is the very element that determines man's ontological existence on a universal ontological ground achieved by Jesus Christ Himself. As man believes in the revealed knowledge of God, he exists as real reality. Otherwise, man's being is not real or genuine in the Christian sense. According to Barth, "This knowledge is reality, so that the baptised man does undergo an ontological (noetic) change within the once-for-all ontological condition created for all men by Jesus Christ."²³³ Nevertheless, Barth's notion of knowledge as reality that brings about an ontological change of man has been called Platonism, signifying that man's salvation is simply dependent upon his acknowledgement of the salvific deed of Jesus Christ. Gunton argues that this accusation is not acceptable for the following two reasons. He first questions, "[I]f it is the case that we are saved by free grace, prior to any worthiness or act of ours, in fact in the face of a form of being which is hostile to God, what else is salvation but the acknowledgement of that which has been done for us already?" And he continues, "[I]t is not necessarily a problem that all this is rooted in eternity. The charges of Platonism must not obscure the fact that this universal

²³² Barth, *Against the Stream*, p. 207.

²³³ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk", p. 91.

salvation is not established by Barth in any way philosophically, but in God's personally active eternity."²³⁴

Then, far from advocating a Platonic salvation of man, Barth's point on the knowledge of God as the ultimate condition of man's true existence is well made and legitimate and warranted in terms of the Bible. For this reason, revelation as the grace of God given to man affirms man's reality that cannot be attained by his own endeavour, i.e., salvation by work. The life changing revelation of God spoken to man defends him from all kinds of accusations and judgment for his sin and transforms him into a new being in the eye of God, because by identifying himself with Jesus Christ he overcomes his old self in sin and becomes a new creature.

Now it is certain that revelation, for Barth, is not a philosophy, a theory, or a speculative concept to be discussed, orated or pondered, but it is God's absolute and ultimate action toward man which takes hold of him entirely.²³⁵ As an indispensable, constitutive element of man's life and being, the revelation of God is never static because it is new to man every morning. It does not mean the Bible is a human construct. Barth makes a clear distinction between human writings, though authoritative, and revelation in the Christian sense as it "cannot be capitalised."²³⁶ Moreover, revelation "cannot compel" but can "only make an appeal" to man, calling him to action in time and space.²³⁷ This revelation is nothing but a reality in which man should participate through his own subjective action by responding to its initial action toward him. This reality in which man should join is eschatological and spiritual in nature, but it is not in the future but in the present as future. This eschatological reality of man is salvation that is already here but not yet fully manifested.

***Analogia actionis* and Salvation**

²³⁴ Colin E. Gunton, "Salvation" in Karl Barth, ed. by John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 155-6.

²³⁵ Cf. Hanvey, Hegel, Rahner, and Karl Barth, p. 223.

²³⁶ Barth, Against the Stream, p. 207.

²³⁷ Barth, Against the Stream, p. 214.

Barth's purpose in employing the *analogia relationis* as a compatible term with the *analogia fidei* is to illustrate the unique relationship between the divinity and the humanity in the Incarnated Jesus Christ. Barth claimed in The Humanity of God, published in 1956, "God does not exist without man."²³⁸ Moreover, he mentioned the same line of thought earlier, in the Church Dogmatics IV/1 published in 1953, in the following manner:

The divine being and life and act *takes* place with ours, as it is only as the divine takes place that ours takes place. To put it in the simplest way, what unites God and us men is that He does not will to be God without us, that He creates us rather to share with us and therefore with our being and life and act His own incomparable being and life and act, that He does not allow His history to be His and ours ours, but causes them to take place as a common history."²³⁹

What does "God does not will to be God without us" really mean? How can the incomparable divine being and life and action be all of a sudden shared with men? Why does the Creator want to share His being and life and action with that of created man? Can man as such participate in the divine nature? Does man's sharing his being and life and action with that of God mean a divinisation of man by participating in the divine being and life and action? Moreover, how and when does this mutual participation happen to both God and man? In order to find appropriate answers for these questions, it is essential to grasp again the mediating role of Christ Jesus along with the core concept of *analogia relationis*.

As Barth defines God's being and life as a dynamic activity,²⁴⁰ he uses all of being and life and action with the same connotation (being=life=action).²⁴¹ Likewise, he considers that the *analogia relationis* and the *analogia actionis* are the same thing.²⁴² Thus, man's participation in the divine being and life and

²³⁸ Barth, Humanity of God, p. 50.

²³⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 7. (Italics mine)

²⁴⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 7.

²⁴¹ With respect to Barth's understanding of "being and action," Jüngel also says in his Karl Barth, a Theological Legacy, p. 121, "Barth understands human being in the same way that he understands divine being: as a 'being in action,' as active being, as activity." Moreover, Barth himself defines the relation between being and act in the following manner in his C.D. II/2, p. 535: "To exist as a man means to act. And action means choosing and deciding." Also see, Barth's C.D. I/2, pp. 364, 366, 369 and C.D. II/2, p. 516.

²⁴² Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 66. In Analogie Entis oder Fidei? Die Frage der Analogie bei Karl Barth (Göttingen, 1965), pp. 116-119, Horst Georg Pöhlmann also describes

action can signify the cooperation of human action with divine action occurring as an event in the relationship made possible by Christ Jesus in whom there is “no isolation of man from God or of God from man.”²⁴³ To put it another way, in Jesus Christ there is no isolation of human *action* from divine *action* or of divine *action* from human *action*. God does not will or want to act alone in Himself but wills to take *action* together with man because God through Jesus Christ wants to bring man salvation that is “the supreme, sufficient, definitive and indestructible fulfilment of being” that “has a part in the being of God.”²⁴⁴

However, this being as man’s salvation becomes a part of the divine being; it is not “a divinised being” in the light of Hegelian synthesis but only “hidden in God.”²⁴⁵ The being of man was hidden in the being of God but has been manifested by the Incarnated Word, Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man. His unique humanity does not exhaust itself in its exclusive individuality but includes “an indefinite multitude of other men, so as to be manifest and effective in those who believe in Him in a way that is absolutely decisive for their past, present and future.”²⁴⁶ The relationship between Adam and man in general does indeed show not “the primary but only the secondary anthropological truth and ordering principle,” because Adam is not a true man but only a provisional image of the true and real Man to come.²⁴⁷ Hence, the true and real humanity can be found not in Adam but in Jesus Christ. From this perspective, man’s true nature is

Barth’s analogy of faith as an analogy of action in his meticulous research into the dispute over *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*. Also see, Gunton’s *Becoming and Being*, p. 168.

²⁴³ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 46. Also see, Balthasar’s *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 108. In this text, Balthasar explicates Barth’s analogy of action in the following manner: “Thus, in contrast to the analogy of being, analogy of faith means two things: first it is not an analogy that can be understood from the standpoint of an observer who surveys all before him and then synthesizes what he surveys. It is not Being as such that the creature has in common with God, despite their fundamental dissimilarity. Rather it is an *action* (inaccessible to all theory): it is human decision that is similar to God’s action, despite their fundamental dissimilarity.”

²⁴⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 7.

²⁴⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 7. According to Gunton, Barth’s understanding of salvation is very much in debt to “the Patristic teaching that in salvation the believer is in some way taken up into the life of the triune God, although it is certainly not right to speak of deification.” in Gunton’s “Salvation” in *Karl Barth*, p. 144.

²⁴⁶ Karl Barth, “Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5” in *Scottish Journal of Theology* Occasional Papers Volume 5, trans. by T.A. Smail (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), p. 3.

²⁴⁷ Barth, *Christ and Adam*, p. 6.

not to be found in Adam, the temporary copy pointing to the original, Jesus Christ who is the true and real Man.

An Ontological Connection between the Humanity of Jesus and Man in General

Jesus Christ does not truly and authentically represent the human race by Himself as an isolated and self-exhaustive singularity without any existential relationship with man in general. Jesus Christ's uniqueness lies in His universally encompassing humanity as man's true and original nature that reconciles the broken relationship of God and man.²⁴⁸ Jesus Christ brings about the salvation of man by identifying Himself with us. His identification with humanity makes peace with God on behalf of man in general. Jesus Christ has created "a common ontological basis" for all human beings. However, there still exist two kinds of reality of man on this basis: real reality in faith without sin and quasi-reality in sin without faith.²⁴⁹

Jesus Christ's encompassing human nature can be effective only when each individual man identifies himself with Him within the common ontological basis accomplished in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Only when man identifies himself with Jesus Christ's humanity in faith, does he become "real reality" in complementary unity with Him. Barth illustrates the complementary unity of Jesus and man in faith in the following manner:

They have to *identify* themselves with Him, because He has already *identified* Himself with them. There is no question of *any merging* or *any confusion* between Him and them, but neither can there be any question of *any abstraction* or *separation*. He in His individuality is theirs, and so they in their individuality can only be His. The ineffaceable distinction between Him and them is the guarantee of *their indissoluble unity* with Him. They as receivers are subordinated and yet indissolubly related to Him as Giver; they as members are subordinated and yet *indissolubly united* with Him as Head.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Barth, Christ and Adam, p. 41.

²⁴⁹ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," pp. 3, 91.

²⁵⁰ Barth, "Christ and Adam," p. 41. (Italics mine)

The act of identification immediately causes man to put himself in relation with Jesus Christ so that he participates in an inseparable and complementary unity with Him. This relationship with Jesus Christ means again a *cooperative action* with Jesus Christ in faith. As Barth claims, both the *analogia relationis* and the *analogia actionis* are the same as the *analogia fidei*.²⁵¹ To put it another way, as the relationship established in the mutual identification between Jesus Christ and man is manifested in a manner of *action*, there is no divine action apart from human action or no human action apart from divine action in the divine-human relationship. This relationship of divine action and human action is complementary in nature because there is no confusion or isolation but harmony in the indissoluble unity.²⁵² Divine action does not swallow human action nor human action resolve into divine action, but each action as such is valid with its own characteristics because, as God's partner, man is "*the subject of his own decision*" in the partnership with Him.²⁵³ If divine action took over human action, it would mean a divinisation of human being in Hegelian dialectic. This misses the essential point of analogy (similarity within dissimilarity) and violates the Chalcedonian pattern of Christology; the true divinity and the true humanity without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. Barth draws not only an indissoluble distinction between divine action and human action but also maintains an inseparable unity along with indestructible order between them in the light of the *qualitative dialectic* of Kierkegaard - the bipolar relational reality in tension.

In this relationship, however, human action as such cannot be complementary with divine action because there is an infinite qualitative distinction between divine action and human action. In order to overcome this stumbling block and associate it with divine action, human action needs salvation that is not inherent within it. This salvation, as "the supreme, sufficient, definitive and indestructible fulfilment of being"²⁵⁴ as Barth defines it, is an eschatological

²⁵¹ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 66.

²⁵² Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 332.

²⁵³ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 396.

²⁵⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 8.

reality of man. This salvation as the ultimate goal of man is revealed in Christ Jesus and comes to man as divine grace. In this salvation, man has a new kind of relationship with God. This future-oriented relationship is no longer merely that of the Creator and the creature, but that of Father and child. Man becomes “a partaker of the divine nature” not as a mere creature, but as a child of God who is surely still man as well.²⁵⁵ In this relationship, man who was once an object of God’s creation now becomes “an active Subject” in a partnership with God.²⁵⁶ Barth clarifies the nature of salvation in the following manner:

What is at first only God’s gracious answer to our failure, God’s gracious help in our plight, and even as such great and wonderful enough, is—when God Himself is the help and answer—His participation in our being, life and activity and therefore obviously our participation in His; and therefore it is nothing more nor less than the coming of salvation itself, the presence of the *έσχατον* in all its fullness. The man in whom God Himself intervenes for us, suffers and acts for us, closes the gap between Himself and us as our representative, in our name and on our behalf, this man is not merely the confirmation and guarantee of our salvation, but because He is God He is salvation, our salvation.²⁵⁷

Man used to have a relationship with God before the fall. However, it was the relationship between the Creator as Lord and the creature as servant that is “not that of sharing the divine nature but having an individual being that is determined by the strictly different being of the Creator.”²⁵⁸ When God created man and woman in His image and likeness, He created them in the form of togetherness in relation that is analogous to the togetherness of the Trinity.²⁵⁹ Although the relationship between man and woman as an image of God was

²⁵⁵ Barth, *The Epistles to the Romans*, pp. 463, 466.

²⁵⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 19. Also see, Colin E. Gunton, “Salvation”, pp.143-158. Gunton gives lucid insight into Karl Barth’s understanding of salvation as the fulfilment of an eschatological reality of man through participating in the being and life and lordship and act of God in Jesus Christ.

²⁵⁷ Barth, C.D.IV/1, p. 13.

²⁵⁸ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 463.

²⁵⁹ Barth, “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” p. 96. In the same text p. 96 Barth illustrates the meaning of *imago Dei* along with *analogia relationis* in the following manner: “[I]nsofar as the man-woman relation (*imago Dei*) is a human togetherness, the fundamental form of human co-existence. This *imago Dei* may be said to be an analogy to the Trinity insofar as there is in God a togetherness. But in the *imago Dei* there is no Trinity. The *tertium comparationis* would be the togetherness. But I would prefer to explain the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 as a picture of a marriage in relation to Israel. This relation is a kind of marriage. This is a prefiguring of how God acts with His people and is later continued in the relation between Jesus Christ and the Church.”

similar to the divine way of being, the relationship between God and man was still not similar to the relationship within the being of God. There was an infinite qualitative and existential distinction between them. Furthermore, the situation became worse as man committed sin against the divine command. As the prophet Isaiah utters (Isaiah 59:1-2; “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear”), the relationship between the Creator and the creature was blocked by human iniquity and sin. Consequently, man could not know who and what God is in the midst of the broken relationship.

In the midst of this fallen situation, God willed to save man through Christ Jesus who is “the Lord humbled for communion with man and likewise the Servant exalted to communion with God.”²⁶⁰ In His grace, the eternal Word of God became flesh and lived among us. What does it mean that the Word became flesh? Flesh means like ours but without sin.²⁶¹ More specifically, His becoming flesh means, “[W]ithout ceasing to be God, it added our humanity to its divinity and received it into a union with itself—a union which is not an intermixture but which is indissoluble.”²⁶² Jesus Christ reconciles God and man by elevating the fallen nature of man and accomplishes the reality of the new covenant. With Christ Jesus, man becomes a child of God. As God’s child along with Jesus, man becomes what he is not by participating in God’s nature. In a similar line of thought, Calvin claims, Jesus as Christ clothed with flesh “gathers believers into participation into the Father.”²⁶³ In other words, as Barth claims, by making peace with God, the God-man Jesus Christ “has accomplished our salvation, i.e., our participation in His being.”²⁶⁴ We know that we as *simul justus et peccator*

²⁶⁰ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 46. Also see Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* IV/2, p. 19. In this book, Barth writes, “In and with His humiliation (as the Son of God) there took place also His exaltation (as the Son of Man). This exaltation is the type and dynamic basis for what will take place and is to be known as the exaltation of man in His reconciliation with God.”

²⁶¹ Barth, “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” pp. 67-68.

²⁶² Karl Barth, “God, Grace and Gospel” in *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers* No. 8, trans. by James Strathearn McNab (Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court, 1959), pp. 4-5.

²⁶³ John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill; trans. by Ford L. Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 155.

²⁶⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 15.

are not like the Son Jesus Christ yet. In the strictest sense, our divine sonship made possible in the Son Jesus Christ is our “future actuality,” our “divine future” that is promised to us through the Word.²⁶⁵ However, the uniqueness of salvation as eschatological truth is “its presence not *in* the future but as the future, as coming to us.”²⁶⁶ Thus, man’s participation in the divine nature is coming truth in hope; both divine initiation and human response are manifested in a common history and a common activity. In other words, both divine action and human action are in a dynamic movement toward eschatological fulfilment.

Barth’s Theology of Redemption: Contextual Change and the Divine Sonship of Man

When we deal with Barth’s theology in general, it is above all important to figure out the right context for each subject. For him, the doctrine of Redemption is ultimately the context of the whole spectrum of his theology.²⁶⁷ The projected volume V of the Church Dogmatics, the doctrine of Redemption, was not published as Barth passed away before its completion. Consequently, Barth’s Church Dogmatics is left to us like an “unfinished symphony” characterising his *opus magnum*, eschatological in nature in pointing to the ultimate future reality not fully manifested yet. Barth once mentioned in his The Christian Life that the doctrine of Redemption could be his final work in the series of the Church Dogmatics. Barth said, “The doctrine of reconciliation should also close with an ethical chapter (and, so, too, when it is time, the doctrine of redemption).”²⁶⁸ Although Barth could not complete the planned volume V, in which he would

²⁶⁵ Barth, The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life, p. 64.

²⁶⁶ Barth, Ethics, p. 465.

²⁶⁷ John D. Godsey also confirms this perspective in Karl Barth’s Table Talk, recorded, edited and published by him in 1963. He says, “The final volume of the Church Dogmatics will undertake an elaboration of the doctrine of Redemption, that is, of the activity of God that is properly appropriated to His mode of existence as Holy Spirit...In this final section Professor Barth must discuss the Doctrine of the ‘Last Things’, of the Final judgement and consummation, of the Command of God from the viewpoint of Promise.” In “Karl Barth’s Table Talk,” p. 12.

²⁶⁸ Barth, The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics Vol. IV/4. Lecture Fragments, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), p. xii.

have dealt with the doctrine of Redemption, we can still gather and extract Barth's basic teachings on this subject from his various short and extensive writings.²⁶⁹

As explicated stage by stage in his Church Dogmatics, we can easily recognize that Barth constructs his theology of ethics on three major pillars of doctrine, the doctrine of Creation, the doctrine of Reconciliation, and the doctrine of Redemption. Concrete explications on the first two doctrines are required on the way to proving the validity and significance of the doctrine of Redemption in the Holy Spirit. The first two doctrines reveal the *penultimate* situations before the Redemption of human nature by the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the doctrine of Redemption deals with the ultimate eschatological reality of man that is the truest being of man and thinkable only within this context. According to Barth, this "eschatological goal" and "the vocation of man" is to be a child of God who can be fully identifiable with the Son Jesus who is true God and true man.²⁷⁰ However, this goal is not in the future but present now as future.²⁷¹ By the *redeeming work of the Holy Spirit*, man becomes a child of God and becomes a son of God "forgetting the 'otherness' of God but first forgetting their own 'otherness.'"²⁷² In the light of Barth's statements, a ground-breaking radical transformation of the "infinite qualitative distinction" between Creator and creature into a Father-children relationship is required in the context of Redemption. The relationship of Father and children is qualitatively different from that of the Lord and servants or of the Saviour and sinners.²⁷³ There is a unique quality of relationship between God the Father and His children.

²⁶⁹ Nigel Biggar, The Hastening That Waits (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 47.

²⁷⁰ In his monograph published in 1956, "Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5," in Scottish Journal of Theology, Barth compares and contrasts two different natures of man; one in Adam and the other in Christ. In this writing, Barth contends that "[T]hey have to identify themselves with Him, because He has already identified Himself with them", p. 41. However, the nature of identification with the Christ does not mean "any merging or any confusion," rather in their relation, "the ineffaceable distinction" between man and Jesus Christ exists in "their indissoluble unity", p. 41. This perspective can be found in his early writing, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 297, 313.

²⁷¹ Barth, Ethics, p. 465.

²⁷² Barth, Ethics, p. 297.

²⁷³ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 270, Ethics, p. 472.

In the light of his various forms of analogy, along with the complementary dialectic, Barth persistently suggests that no positive relationship can be developed between the Creator and the creature and between the Reconciler and the sinner, and the infinite qualitative distinction should remain as an ever-distinguishing factor. However, in the context of Redemption in the Holy Spirit, the subject of human action is a free child of God who partakes of the divine nature and acts according to both his own subjective will and divine will at the same time. Barth appears to argue in his books, such as The Epistle to the Romans (1922), Ethics (1928-1929), Church Dogmatics and The Humanity of God (1956), that God's Being is characterised as "wholly other" than any other creaturely beings. In the same way, Barth makes the point that there exists an "infinite qualitative distinction between God and human being" in limited contexts, such as the relationship of the Creator to the creature and the relationship between the Saviour and the sinner. According to Barth, "the relation of the creature to the Creator is not that of sharing the divine nature but having an individual being that is determined by the strictly different being of the Creator."²⁷⁴

However, when man is redeemed through the *Holy Spirit*, he is not a mere creature and a forgiven sinner; he also becomes "a partaker of the divine nature."²⁷⁵ When Barth refers to the "eschatological reality of man," he insists that the reality of the man who is redeemed "includes more than that he was created by God and that in the state of sin which contradicts his divine creation, the inconceivable grace of the same God reconciled him to God."²⁷⁶ In another place, Barth also claims, "In the realm of creation we are servants; in the realm of reconciliation we are subdued enemies; in the realm of redemption, however, we are—yet again—children of God."²⁷⁷ This eschatological reality of man is the ultimate goal of creation and reconciliation. This eschatological goal, that has not

²⁷⁴ Barth, Ethics, p. 463.

²⁷⁵ Barth, Ethics, p. 466.

²⁷⁶ Barth, Ethics, p. 463.

²⁷⁷ Karl Barth, The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics, trans. by R. Birch Hoyle (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), p. 66.

yet been realised but is the most real being of man to come, is to be God's child.²⁷⁸ In the context of the relationship between Father and son that occurs in the *Holy Spirit*, the Redeemer, as Barth insists, expressions like "wholly other" and the "infinite qualitative distinction" are neither applicable nor acceptable. In the relationship between Father and son, man is adopted by the Father in the Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In this relationship, man becomes a spiritually begotten child of God who is fully identified with the Son Jesus. We Christians become what we are not by nature, sons of God, with the Word of Truth.²⁷⁹

The hypostatic union of Jesus Christ opened up a wholly transformed situation and impossible possibility to human nature through the Holy Spirit, participating in His victory and the divine nature. At this point, Barth clearly transforms the irreconcilable qualitative difference between divine nature and human nature into a bipolar relational reality; he sets out the possibility of man's participation in the nature of God. However, this union of human nature with divine nature should not be understood in the manner of Hegelian synthesis. Rather, this union should be understood as a *complementary synthesis of the bipolar relational reality in tension* between them that is similar to the essential characteristics of the perichoretic union of the triune God and Chalcedonian Christology; an inseparable unity, an indissoluble differentiation and an indestructible order manifested in the economic and soteriological involvements of the triune God in time and space. Regarding Gregory of Nazianzus' understanding of the penetration (περιχώρησις) of the divine nature into the human nature, John of Damascus also comments that "These words [of Gregory the Theologian] do not mean any change in nature, but rather...the hypostatic union...and the penetration (περιχώρησις) of the natures into one another (εἰς ἀλλήλας)."²⁸⁰ In the light of the analogical use of the dynamics of the perichoretic union between divine nature and human nature, Father remains as Father, and children remain as children in the transformed relationship between God and man

²⁷⁸ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 462. Cf. Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life*, pp. 62-67.

²⁷⁹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 458, *Ethics*, p. 297.

²⁸⁰ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Church Fathers*, Vol. I: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation, p. 425.

in the context of Redemption. As the Son Jesus never becomes the Father in the Holy Trinity, so the children remain as children to their Father, retaining their unique status in their participation in the divine nature.

According to Jüngel's understanding of Barth's theological ethics, the relationship between *the man Jesus and man in general* is analogous to that between *the man Jesus and God* that is again analogous to the relationship within *the divine Being*.²⁸¹ In other words, the relationship between the man Jesus and man in general is analogous to the inner divine relationship. In that sense, we can say that the relationship between the man Jesus and man in general is analogous to the perichoretic union of the Trinity that is manifested to us through the economic, soteriological divine revelation in the world. With respect to the analogical relationship between the man Jesus and man in general, Barth points out the identification of man with Christ who is a true man and true God, through adoption as co-heir of God. He says, "We are... heirs of the eternal life and being and having and doing of God Himself... With Christ we are sons of God, with Him, we are joint-heirs of God... As His sons, being what we are not, we stand at His side, participating in His victory...."²⁸² In particular, Barth clearly defines the meaning of becoming a child of God by saying that "In naming myself son of God, I mean precisely what is meant when Christ is so named (viii. 3)... identified with the new man in Christ...."²⁸³ Moreover, in his The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life, Barth reconfirms his thought in the following manner:

Revelation of God would not be revelation if it should not give us *a share in God's own nature*, however that be understood. With the words creation, reconciliation, this, as yet, has not been said as it is. In other words we are, as yet, not the children of God. We are told that we are his creatures, but in those words we are not told that his grace is victorious over our sins. But God cannot be revealed as our Creator and Reconciler unless, at the same time, we are thereby named as being his children, whom he begets as his children, and is thus our Redeemer. Because God is revealed to us we are the ransomed of God. Our divine future is present

²⁸¹ Jüngel, "Die Möglichkeit theologischer Anthropologie auf dem Grunde der Analogie", pp. 541-542. Also see John Thompson's Christ in Perspective in the Theology of Karl Barth (Edinburgh: St. Andrews, 1978), p. 79.

²⁸² Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 301.

²⁸³ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 296.

with us through the Word: the final reality purposed for us by God is present.²⁸⁴

Revelation of the Word of God opens up the way, the truth, and the life that fulfil the goal of the creature, participating in the divine nature through identifying ourselves with the God-man Jesus Christ. Moreover, “a share in God’s own nature” is the very goal of the divine revelation and Incarnation that are manifested in the context of Redemption. Indeed, we are creatures in relation to the Creator and forgiven sinners with respect to the Saviour. At the same time, however, we have to bear in mind the fact that we are not only creatures and forgiven sinners but also children of God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.²⁸⁵ Thus, limiting ourselves only as serving creatures or forgiven sinners does not do justice in identifying our true and ultimate status in relation to the triune God. Christ Jesus is the one who has once-for-all paved for man the way of participating in the divine nature. Through Jesus, man joins in fellowship with God.

The Creaturely Subject Participating in Divine Lordship

The infinite qualitative distinction between God the Creator and man the creature has been qualitatively transformed in the light of Barth’s doctrine of Redemption in the Holy Spirit. Man becomes a child of God in Jesus Christ by identifying himself with the Son Jesus who is the true God and the true Man. Becoming a child of God in Jesus is man’s impossible possibility as a creature and a forgiven sinner. Moreover, becoming a child of God in Jesus is the truest being of man. Hence, through the true God and the true Man, God the Creator becomes a faithful and caring Father to His creature, and man becomes a loving child of God. This eschatological reality of man has been made possible and has become the truest reality to man since the event of Incarnation. The Word of God assumed human flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit and made flesh unite with divinity. The Incarnation of the Word has established an unbreakable fellowship

²⁸⁴ Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life* (hereafter abbreviated to C.L.), p. 62.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Barth, *Ethics*, pp. 472-473.

and unity of flesh with God. All these paradoxical events have been accomplished in the work of the Holy Spirit. Barth explains the value of the Incarnation through the Holy Spirit in the following manner:

That this is possible, that this other, this being as man, this flesh, is there for God, for fellowship and even unity with God, that flesh can be the Word when the Word becomes flesh, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Christ. *This work of the Spirit is prototypal of the work of the Spirit in the coming into being of the children of God*; in the same way, not directly but indirectly, *per adoptionem*, in faith in Christ, we become that which we are not by nature, namely, children of God.²⁸⁶

Without the miraculous event of the Incarnation of the Word by the Holy Spirit, the eschatological reality of man as a child of God would not be real to man. As Barth claims above, the Incarnation of the Word in the work of the Holy Spirit is the *prototype* of man's becoming a child of God. Although, in essence, the sonship of man as *filius Dei adoptione* is different from that of Jesus Christ as *Filius Dei natura*, by believing in Jesus as the Lord and Saviour, man becomes a child of God through the adoption in the *Holy Spirit* in the light of the *analogia fidei*.²⁸⁷ As Jesus is the first born among many brethren, He is the nexus through which man participates in the divine nature and becomes a child of God. Through the event of Incarnation of the Word by the Holy Spirit, a new type of relationship emerges between God and man; God the Father acts in relation to man, and man acts in relation to God. However, the crux of the matter is how to evaluate the act of man as a response to the command of God in the midst of the divine sovereignty. More specifically in Barth's theology of special ethics that deals with the command of God with particular reference to man's response to it, it is crucial to figure out how Barth characterises man's role in relation to divine providence and the universal Lordship of God in the creaturely world.

The starting point for looking into and answering these questions is the Word of God, in which the unity of God and man acting in relation to each other is clearly manifested. The Word comes to man as a free command of God that is also a divine act in relation to man. The Word as a free command and act of God

²⁸⁶ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 486. (Italics mine.)

²⁸⁷ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 458.

demands man's obedience as a free and voluntary response. Freedom is the indispensable element in the relation of divine action and human action. In such a way, the freedom of God is honoured, and the freedom of man that is both granted to and demanded of him becomes valid and active as it is. As Barth claims, the task of special ethics is to reveal an "event between God and man, to its uncontrollable content."²⁸⁸ Consequently, the inner dynamics of special ethics in this relation of God and man in the Word is not legalistic or casuistic by nature. In Barth's framework of special ethics, the cause and effect mechanism cannot be found or valid. Rather, it gives lucid insight into the nature of the relation between God and man out of which an uncontrollable event occurs. It is uncontrollable indeed. In other words, the content of any event between free divine command and free human response to it is discontinuous and undetermined even though it still occurs on the ground of the absolute grace of God. Hence, it is important to recognize a new type of power structure that emerges between divine action and human action in the Word.

Regarding the relation between the absolute sovereignty of God and receptive human response, John Webster introduces two major Evangelical theologians, Luther and Barth, by comparing and contrasting their own views on this issue. Webster explicates their perspectives in the following manner:

Luther speaks of human action as wholly enclosed within (even, perhaps, supplanted by) divine action; Barth speaks more readily of different agencies, divine and human, in which the secondary (human) agent is both receptive to and in correspondence to, but not absorbed by, the primary (divine) agent...For Luther, even in action one is utterly passive, that upon which another acts; for Barth, even in receiving one is a spontaneous doer, acting in correspondence to the action of the one whose act is received.²⁸⁹

As Webster indicates, in the light of Luther's understanding of the nature of the relation of divine action and human action, God is recognized as a sovereign Lord who solely practises His providence and universal lordship in the world. Consequently, with respect to Luther's conception, there is little place and need for human act or participation in the providence of the almighty God. In a way,

²⁸⁸ Barth, C.L., p. 5.

²⁸⁹ John Webster, Barth's Moral Theology (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), p. 159.

human action is hardly recognized, nor does it play any active role in the divine governance of the world. In this type of framework, man is rather seen as a being with nominal freedom. Even if he has any freedom, he can hardly practise it in life because human action is absorbed into the grand ocean of divine providence and absolute universal lordship. Thus, from Luther's perspective, divine action virtually so dominates and rules over human action that eventually it would insinuate an oppressive and coercive authoritarian governance of God in place of the freedom divinely granted to man. In contrast to Luther's understanding, Webster sharply points out that Barth's conception of human action is active and responsive to divine action by itself and is not feebly absorbed by divine action or passive in response to His command. Consequently, Webster argues that for Barth it is natural to make a clear distinction between the primary agent (divine action) and the secondary agent (human action) in the relation of divine action and human action.

However, the crux of the matter is not whether human action is receptive response to the providence and universal lordship of God, but how we should evaluate the quality of distinctive moral action in relation to sovereign divine action. Although Webster has concisely compared Barth's moral ethics with those of Luther by referring to the relation between divine action and human action, we still have to figure out how human action could be receptive to and in correspondence to divine action in space and time. The question of the relation between sovereign divine agency and human agency cannot be resolved in a dualistic contention between them as Luther insists. We should not employ the Hegelian dialectic in this context, either. In the process of resolving the paradoxical relationship between divine action and human action, we need to keep in mind the fact that in order not to insinuate any type of divinization or humanization neither action should violate or ignore the reality of the other; each action should be recognized as it is in relation to the other. Regarding the relationship between divine action and human action in this context, as Barth

explicitly describes, it is certain that these two actions are “indissolubly related and united.”²⁹⁰

Then, how could the two mutually exclusive and qualitatively different actions of God and man be *indissolubly* related and united with each other? If these are indissolubly related and united with each other as Barth claims, would it be possible to compare the relation and unity of the two exclusive and distinct actions with the economic manifestation of the Trinity and the hypostatic union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus? Would Barth agree to the comparison of his own definition of the indissoluble relation of divine action and human action with the inner dynamics of the perichoretic unity of the trinitarian modes of the divine being? From now on, I will deal with how Barth explicates the nature of the relation between divine action and human action in the light of his *analogia relationis* that is geared toward bringing about a similarity and correspondence between the *inner divine* communion and the *divine and human* communion.

In the light of his special ethics, Barth posits the necessary inseparable closeness between God and man.²⁹¹ In the contexts of creation and reconciliation, man is considered as a finite creature with a forgiven sinful nature that cannot bear the awe of the Creator and the holiness of the Saviour. Consequently, the relation between God and man is described in terms of “wholly otherness”, “perpendicularly from above”, and “infinite qualitative distinction.”²⁹² In these terms, both God and man are irreconcilable to each other as they are so different from each other.

However, in the context of Redemption, the infinite qualitative distinction and wholly otherness of God cease to be a stumbling block to man but serve as a prerequisite of an indissoluble relation between God and man. It is first accomplished by the Incarnation, the Word assuming flesh through the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, Jesus the Son of God and the Son of man is the one and only

²⁹⁰ Karl Barth, “Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5”, p. 41.

²⁹¹ Barth, C.L., p. 5. In the same text, Barth claims, “Special ethics, then, must resist the temptation to become legalistic and casuistic ethics. Its task is to point to that event between God and man, to its uncontrollable content.”

²⁹² Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 42.

nexus for man to participate in the divine nature. In such a way, man indwells in God, and God indwells in man. God is no longer an unapproachable being to man. Rather, God becomes a loving Father to His creaturely man in Jesus the Son. The relation of God to man is now analogous to the relation of father to child; the God who is the Father to the Son Jesus is the same Father to His children in Jesus.

It is, a matter, however, of God's togetherness with man. Who God is and what He is in His deity He proves and reveals not in a vacuum as a divine being-for-Himself, but precisely and authentically in the fact that He exists, speaks, and acts as the partner of man, though of course as the absolutely superior partner.²⁹³

Here, we must pay special attention to Barth's use of the word, "partner," when he refers to man in relation with God. This remark gives us an idea that Barth considers the relationship between divine action and human action as a partnership. As God the Father works and lives together with the Son Jesus, God wants to live and work with man considering him as His partner. No matter how inferior he may be to his divine Partner, man is reckoned as a partner of God in the shared partnership between God and man. According to Barth, both God and man as partners share and assist one another in the same stated activity. Barth develops this kind of radical comparison from Jesus Christ who is the archetype of the partnership between God and man.

In Jesus Christ there is no isolation of man from God or of God from man. Rather, in Him we encounter the history, the dialogue, in which God and man meet together and are together, the reality of the covenant mutually contracted, preserved, and fulfilled by them. Jesus Christ is in His one Person, as true God, man's loyal partner, and as true man, God's. He is the Lord humbled for communion with man and likewise the Servant exalted to communion with God.²⁹⁴

Jesus is the one and only Mediator through whom man encounters God, and God reveals Himself to man. Only through Jesus, the true God and the true man, both God and man communicate and work together as partners to each other.

²⁹³ Barth, Humanity of God, p. 45.

²⁹⁴ Barth, Humanity of God, p. 46.

Here, we must keep in mind the significant value of the Incarnation and the hypostatic union of Jesus. As the true God, Jesus does have divinity in His Person. At the same time, as a true man, Jesus does have humanity in His Person, too. Consequently, in Jesus God and man, it is certain that God's deity does not exclude His humanity. If Jesus were not human, He would not be a true God. Hence, to be a true God, humanity is an indispensable element of the person of Jesus Christ. Barth makes himself clearer on this perspective in the following manner:

God requires no exclusion of humanity, no non-humanity, not to speak of inhumanity, in order to be truly God...It would be false deity of a false God if in His deity His humanity did not also immediately encounter us. Such false deities are by Jesus Christ once for all made a laughingstock. In Him the fact is once-for-all established that God does not exist without man.²⁹⁵

First of all, according to Barth's statement above, the Being of God requires humanity to be truly God. The Word that was God and was with God in the beginning became flesh and made His dwelling among men.²⁹⁶ The Word became flesh; the Word that was God became man not only for the time being. The Word became the truest man forever and dwells in men. In such a way, Jesus proves Himself to be worthy to be called "*Immanuel*." Ever since the paradoxical event of the Incarnation of the Word, God does not exist without man. If humanity were not compatible with the deity of God, He would not be an authentic God whom the Christian believes in. In and through the Son Jesus, God decides to be with man. Moreover, as Barth claims, "God does not exist without man" means an inseparable relation between God and man.

Barth presents the same line of thought on the partnership between God and man in the light of the *analogia actionis* in his later writings, the Church Dogmatics, by referring to divine providence and the universal lordship of God. In dealing with the objective manifestation and work of divine providence and the

²⁹⁵ Barth, Humanity of God, p. 50.

²⁹⁶ John 1:1, 14.

universal lordship of God in world occurrences, God summons His children to participate in the divine world-governance and rule within it.

[O]ur sketch would be incomplete if in conclusion we did not expressly consider the creaturely subject which participates in the divine lordship, not merely from without, as a creature which is preserved and accompanied and ruled by Him like all other creatures, but in some sense from within, as a creature which not only experiences this rule in practice but perceives and acknowledges and affirms and approves it, which is in fact thankful for it and wills to cleave and conform to it.²⁹⁷

Here, Barth defines the Christian as both *object* and *subject* of the universal lordship of God. He is not only under the rule of God but also participates in the divine governance of the world. Barth draws a clear distinction between man as a creaturely subject and all other creatures under the providence and rule of God the Creator. Man is considered as a creaturely subject who joins in the divine providence and rule with Him by acknowledging and affirming the lordship of God over himself as well as all other creatures. In this sense, the Christian is not only different from other creatures but also even participates in the divine world-governance from within.

²⁹⁷ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 239.

PART II: KARL BARTH'S TRINITARIAN ECCLESIOLOGY: ANALOGICAL USE OF THE PERICHORETIC PATTERN OF THE DIVINE COMMUNION IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONTEXT

Chapter IV

Barth's Trinitarian Ecclesiology: The Church Where Divine Action and Human Action Unite Together

Introduction

In this chapter along with the following two chapters in part II, I will work on the analogical use of the pattern of the perichoretic inner divine communion in relation to the divine-human communion in the ecclesiastical context, on the basis of Barth's *analogia relationis* and *analogia actionis* that reveal a correspondence and similarity between "the relationship within the being of God on the one hand" and the relationship "between the being of God and that of man on the other."²⁹⁸ In other words, I will try to lay bare Barth's use of the *analogia relationis* and *analogia actionis* in his trinitarian theology in the ecclesiastical context where divine action and human action unite together, by demonstrating an indirect correspondence and similarity between the perichoretic *intra divine* communion and the complementary *divine-human* communion in his theology of ethics.²⁹⁹

The doctrine of περιχώρησις can best be served by describing the inner divine *togetherness in relation* as "the eternal movement of Communion which the Triune God ever is within himself and in his active relations toward us through

²⁹⁸ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 220. Barth follows Thomas Aquinas' view on the *res subsistentes in divina natura* on the basis of *relationes*, *intra* divine relations (C.D. I/1, p. 357). Thus, regarding the three divine modes of being, Barth contends that the three modes are distinct in their relations to one another (C.D. I/1, p. 363). With respect to a similar line of thought of the Greek Orthodox tradition, also see Zizioulas' *Being as Communion*, p. 17. Barth used the term, *analogia relationis* for the first time in his Church Dogmatics III/2 when he explained the nature of the divine-human relationship. Moreover, his use of the term can be frequently found in the ecclesial context.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 220. Also see, Gunton, *Becoming and Being*, p. 172. And, John McIntyre, "Analogy", in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 12 (1959), pp. 15, 16. Barth's *analogia relationis*, which we are dealing with in this context as a similarity and correspondence between *two different relationships*, refers to the typical definition of *analogia proportionalitatis extrinsecae*, in contrast to *analogia proportionalitatis intrinsecae*.

the *Holy Spirit*.”³⁰⁰ The characteristic of the spiritual perichoretic relationship between the three divine Persons is not confined exclusively to the inner divine communion. The dynamics of περιχώρησις as *vestigium Dei* can be used as an analogy of relation in space and time. In contrast to skeptical opinions among many theologians on the use of the patristic theology of περιχώρησις, Gunton highly appreciates and advocates the analogical use of the concept of περιχώρησις that explicates the *economic* and *soteriological* involvement of God in the spatial and temporal world by virtue of the dynamic, mutual reciprocity and relatedness of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.³⁰¹ As Gunton points out, “Perichoresis is a concept which, because it derives from reflection on the involvement of God in time and space, is not conceptually foreign to createdness.”³⁰² In a similar line of thinking, with respect to the existential manifestation of the dynamics of περιχώρησις, Hanvey contends that “It is a *perichoretic relation* whereby the Church is created and sustained in the image, the *koinōnia* of God’s life.”³⁰³ Furthermore, Robert Martin claims that the perichoretic divine communion between the Persons of the Trinity is “the ultimate conceptual and ontological basis of Christian communion within the body of Christ and extending beyond it.”³⁰⁴ For this reason, as he contends, “All structures and forms of authority that constitute the church should be critiqued and reconstructed in the light of the perichoretic relations among the divine Persons.”³⁰⁵ The concept of περιχώρησις as it is reflected in Barth’s theology of

³⁰⁰ T.F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), p. 141.

³⁰¹ Cf. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, pp. 163, 164, 165.

³⁰² Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, p. 167. Furthermore, Gunton argues that the concept of περιχώρησις within the world can be used not only analogically but also *transcendentally* by suggesting that “everything in it contributes to the being of everything else, enabling everything to be what it distinctively is.” (p. 166).

³⁰³ Hanvey, *Hegel, Rahner, and Karl Barth*, p. 352. (Italics mine)

³⁰⁴ Robert. K. Martin, *The Incarnate Ground of Christian Faith*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), p. 341. Cf. Also see, Leonardo Boff’s *Trinity and Society*. Trans. by Paul Burns. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988). In this book, Boff gives insight into the perichoretic Trinity as the model and source for a human society based on universal collaboration and equality.

³⁰⁵ Martin, *The Incarnate Ground of Christian Faith*, p. 341-342.

ethics would provide a unique Christian epistemological framework in the ecclesial context.³⁰⁶

However, there is a difficulty in a direct use of the word, *περιχώρησις*, in describing the relation of God and man. This word first of all refers to the co-inherence of the Persons of the Trinity in the divine Being.³⁰⁷ It can also be used in describing Christ's hypostatic union between divinity and humanity. Thus, its *direct, intrinsic* relationship between God and man is unthinkable because the word itself is invented for the exclusive use of describing the intrinsic, hypostatic relationship of the three Persons of the divine Being and Christ's unique hypostatic union.

Nonetheless, its *indirect, analogical* use in terms of a great similarity and correspondence in the midst of a greater dissimilarity between God and man would be possible in the light of Barth's own claims.³⁰⁸ Regarding the *analogia relationis* in the relationship between divine action and human action, according to Barth, Christ's relation to man is only a copy of His relation to His Father. For instance, "The relationship of Jesus to the disciples is not original, but an exact *copy* of the relationship in which He stands to the Father and the Father to Him."³⁰⁹ In other words, Barth thinks that an analogous relation of Christ to God the Father is the prototype of his relation to man. The relationship between Jesus Christ and man is a copy of the original relationship between the Son Jesus and the Father in the light of the *analogia relationis*, a great similarity in the midst of a greater dissimilarity. As Jüngel explicates the complex relationship and analogies within Barth's theology of ethics, the relationship between *God* and *the Man Jesus*

³⁰⁶ Nigel Biggar has already pointed out the "perichoretic nature of Barth's ethics" in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity characterized by *περιχώρησις* in his *The Hastening that Waits*, p. 46. However, his claim is confined to Barth's special ethics, not to general ethics. In other words, in the light of Biggar's explication, the pattern of *περιχώρησις* is manifested exclusively within human action, apart from divine action. However, my research interest is focused on the analogical use of the pattern of *περιχώρησις* in the inner divine communion with reference to the divine-human communion.

³⁰⁷ This term was initially introduced to the field of theology by Gregory of Nazianzus in order to describe the interchangeability of the properties of the Three Persons of God. He says, "As the natures, so also the appellations are mixed (κριναμένων) and they penetrate (περιχωρουσών) into one another (εἰς ἀλλήλας) by reason of their coalescence." In Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, Volume I: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation*, p. 421.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 239.

is analogous to the relationship *within the divine being*. Moreover, the relation of *the Man Jesus* and *man* in general is also analogous to the relationship between *God* and *the Man Jesus*. Similarly, the relationship between *God* and *man* is analogous to the relationships *within the divine being*.³¹⁰

Lee also points out that Barth's *analogia relationis* signifying a similarity in correspondence is applicable "not only within the I-Thou relationship between man in general but between the divine and human I-Thou relationship."³¹¹ Regarding the relationship of the "man" Jesus with other "men," Barth also claims that "The creaturely nature of these beings cannot be alien or opposed to that of Christ, for all the disparity."³¹² For instance, along with maintaining the uniqueness of the Man Jesus over against man in general, Barth insists that "[F]or all the disparity between Him and us He affirms these others as beings which are not merely unlike Him in His creaturely existence and therefore His humanity, but also like Him in some basic form." For this reason, as he concludes, "The whole distinction of His humanity would thus fall to the ground as quite impossible."³¹³

In the light of Barth's *analogia relationis* and *analogia actionis*, I will delve further into Barth's understanding of the relation of human action to divine action along with the analogical use of the trinitarian concept of *περιχώρησις* in the ecclesiastical context. The major task of this chapter is to lay out Barth's own exemplary statements throughout his works, mainly his *Church Dogmatics*, with respect to Barth's theology of the Church, and to measure an indirect similarity in correspondence between the *perichoretic inner divine communion* and the *complementary divine-human relation* along with the dynamics of the order and power-structure of the Church, in order to give due responsibility and value to human action with respect to divine action.

³⁰⁹ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 220.

³¹⁰ Eberhard Jüngel, "Die Möglichkeit theologischer Anthropologie auf dem Grunde der Analogie," in *Evangelische Theologie* Vol. 22, no. 10 (October 1962), pp. 541-542.

³¹¹ Lee, "Karl Barth's Use of Analogy in His *Church Dogmatics*", p. 144.

³¹² Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 223.

³¹³ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 223.

Essence of God; the Three Divine Modes of Being in the Light of *Analogia relationis*

The Christian God who reveals Himself according to Scripture is essentially different in nature from gods of any other religions. The Christian understanding of God postulates a *sui generis* conceptual and cognitive framework. It requires us to follow a unique way of understanding in many different respects. Naturally, it is easy to misunderstand Christianity on the whole when we attempt to understand its teachings from the perspective of the generally accepted epistemological and cultural frameworks in the world. We may encounter this kind of difficulty especially with respect to the concept of *being*. After careful investigation of the God revealed in Scripture, the early church fathers developed a unique understanding of the trinitarian hypostatic ontology, the doctrine of the Trinity, one in three distinctive modes of Being subsisting in perichoretic relation: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Barth understands the doctrine of the Trinity in the following manner:

The distinguishable fact of the three divine modes of being is to be understood in terms of their distinctive *relations* and indeed their distinctive *genetic relations* to one another.... Now the real modes of being in God cannot be derived, of course, from the material distinctions in these or similar conceptual ternaries.... But they can be derived from the regularly recurring relations of the three concepts to one another as these occur most simply between the concepts of Father, Son and Spirit. The threeness in God's oneness is grounded in these *relations*. This threeness consists in the fact that in the essence or act in which God is God there is first a pure origin and then two different issues, the first of which is to be attributed solely to the origin and the second and the different one to both the origin and also the first issue.³¹⁴

What Barth states above is considerably indebted to the work of the patristic, especially of the Eastern, Church. According to the above statement, one can easily notice two significant elements of God's trinitarian existence. First, Persons of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, should be understood as

³¹⁴ Barth, C.D. I/1, pp. 363, 364. (Italics mine.) In C.D. I/1, p. 366, Karl Barth quotes other theologians' definitions of the doctrine of the Trinity in this respect, such as "The divine persons in themselves are nothing but subsistent relations" (J. Pohle, op. cit., 328); "The Trinitarian persons do not have their own subject of inherence, but exist as *relationes subsistentes*" (B. Bartmann, op. cit., p. 211).

valid only within an interdependent communal relationship to one another. It is impossible to apprehend each Person of God without the other. Even though they are not materially or numerically separable, God exists through three unique modes of relations which constitute and condition the total Being of God.

Secondly, a *fluid* form of hierarchical relationship exists within the trinitarian Godhead. As Barth claims, “Father, Son and Spirit are distinguished from one another by the fact that without inequality of essence or dignity, without increase and diminution of deity, they stand in dissimilar relations of origin to one another.”³¹⁵ Although the three Persons equally exist *ad intra* and are related with one another without any type of division, God the Father as “a pure origin” of the Godhead provides both a focus and an orientation of the unity of the three Persons. These two distinctive aspects of God’s Being, relationality of the Trinity (*ad intra*) and hierarchy (*ad extra*) of the Godhead in the economic divine manifestation, are essential to the overall understanding of Godhead and the Church. Acknowledging these aspects, Barth explores in his theology the dynamics of the relationality and the nature of the hierarchy of the Godhead. It is not too much to say that Barth’s doctrines of the Trinity and his ecclesiology are heavily characterised by these two elements, which are essential to obtain a more concrete understanding of Barth’s exposition on the nature of immanent *relationality* and economic *hierarchy* of the triune God.

With regard to the trinitarian ontology, Barth presupposes that God’s Being is a relational Being. Each person of God mutually conditions and constitutes the divine Being within their unique communal relationship. The relation of the Trinity requires the mutual interdependence and complete, autonomous participation of each Person of the Godhead. Barth explicates the characteristics of the hypostasis of the divine Being in the following way:

God’s essence is indeed one, and even different relations of origin do not entail separation. They rather imply—for where there is difference there is also fellowship—a definite participation of each mode of being in the other modes of relations of origin, a complete participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being, and indeed, since the modes of being

³¹⁵ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 363.

are in fact identical with the relations of origin, a complete participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being.³¹⁶

As McElway describes it, with special reference to Karl Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, the word *περιχώρησις* "refers to an inter-penetration and exchange of functions among the three divine persons without loss of their individual distinctiveness; thus, the Father can suffer with the Son without losing His transcendence and power, just as the Son can be subordinate to the Father and yet participate with Him in full dignity and power."³¹⁷ In order to avoid a modalistic understanding of the triune God, one should keep in mind at this point that the Son's obedience as an economic, soteriological divine involvement in time and space must be conceived as an obedience as Lord with *no* inequality or inferiority in the divine Being because the Son is never dominated by the Father. The Son is not only obedient but also shares with the Father in His sovereign lordship. For this reason, one should not see obedience in the Son as indicating inferiority to the Father but rather as the economic, analogical expression of their relationship in the world.³¹⁸

The Holy Spirit and His People as Two Indispensable Elements of Church Service

Barth applies the dynamics of the perichoretic unity of the triune God when he explains the meaning of the work of God with respect to the divine essence. Barth does not differentiate between God's essence and His work. These are not two different things but one. Barth claims:

³¹⁶ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 370. The etymology of *περιχώρησις* is: the prefix, *peri-*, which is to be taken as standing for the phrase "at all points"; and the root terms *chora*, "space" or "room," and *choreo*, "to proceed"; which combine to give us the meaning of *perichoresis* as "mutual interpenetration at all points. See H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, p. 418. Other ways of translating this perichoretic mutual indwelling of God and humanity in Christ use "the notion of 'coinherence', with the dynamic connotation of a mutual act, analogous to a well-choreographed dance." See J.E. Loder and W.J. Neidhardt, *The Knight's Move* (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992), p. 202.

³¹⁷ Alexander McElway, "Perichoretic Possibilities in Barth's Doctrine of Male and Female", *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 7, No. 3 (New Jersey: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983), pp. 231-43.

³¹⁸ Cf. John Thompson, "On the Trinity," in *Theology Beyond Christendom* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1986), p. 18.

God's work is His essence in its relation to the reality which is distinct from Him which is to be created or is created by Him. The work of God is the essence of God as the essence of Him, who (N.B. in a free decision grounded in His essence but not constrained by His essence) is revealer, revelation and being revealed, or Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. In this work of His, God is revealed to us.³¹⁹

According to T.F. Torrance's exposition, this distinctive teaching of Barth is originally indebted to St Athanasius' discussion of the one activity of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He explains Barth's theology of the divine Being with respect to that of St Athanasius in the following manner:

If there were any disjunction or discrepancy between God's Being and His acts or His acts and His Being, that would imply that God is not after all in Himself what He is shown to be in the Gospel through the Incarnate Son and in the Holy Spirit. Thus the very basis of Athanasius' doctrine of the one Triune God in the co-activity and co-essentiality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, depends on His holding inseparably together the Being and the Activity, the Activity and the Being of God.... The fact that God's Word, Jesus Christ, inheres in His Being means that God's Being is speaking Being, not Being that also speaks but Being that speaks precisely as Being, for God's Being and His Word interpenetrate one another and are inseparably one.³²⁰

Then, as God's act is God's work which reveals God's essence, one should be able to find the attributes one can assign to God's essence in His action. In that respect, the dynamics of the tri-unity of God must be revealed to us in God's work. Thus, the Being of God should be understood as a Being in act. In the light of the *analogia relationis* and the *analogia actionis*, Barth's identification of God's Being with His work in relation to His essence is directly related to the being of the Church and the dynamics of her service.

Barth defines the work of God, which is identical with the essence of God, as the Church's common worship, which is the ground of participation, revelation, prayer, and communal relationship. Worship is not only where the community is edified and edifies itself, but it is also the very origin of the community.³²¹ Consequently in its totality, the community as an act of God becomes a concrete

³¹⁹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 371.

³²⁰ T.F. Torrance, "Karl Barth and Patristic Theology," in *Theology Beyond Christendom* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1986), pp. 224, 225.

event in time and place and is the place where a spiritual communion of all members occurs as an event in human history. In its goal in communion, not merely in the administration of the Lord's Supper, Christian worship itself is the action of God, of Jesus, and of the community itself for the community. In his Gifford Lectures on the text of the Scottish Confession delivered in the University of Aberdeen in 1937 and 1938, Barth deals with this matter more explicitly:

The Church service is in the first instance primarily, in origin and substance, *divine action*, and is only then *human action* secondarily, by derivation, and an accident of the former. What man should and can do here is to serve. And that this service is *divine* service is something which is brought about not by man but by God and God alone...The primary ground for the Church service lies outside ourselves. It lies in the presence and the action of Jesus Christ.³²²

The true initiator and principal of the Church service is Jesus Christ. He constitutes and ordains the service. Thus, it is God's concrete manifestation of Himself and becomes His living action in time and space. The Church service is not controlled by what people desire in it. God is the ultimate source and the pure origin of the event. God is the One who calls and commissions people, and His people obey the divine call and appointment. In this sense, the Church service is the most important and yet mysterious event which can possibly take place on earth, because its primary content is not visible, the work of man, but the invisible action of Jesus Christ. Only when God constitutes the service as the sovereign Lord, are people called to indwell in Him and participate in the service which is nothing but divine action and Being.

With respect to *form* and *content* of the Church service, however, Barth clearly points out that the true Church service requires *response of people* as well as the work of the Holy Spirit. Even though the Church service is instituted by God, it consists of concrete creaturely media in time and space, such as the water of baptism, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper and the speech and action of

³²¹ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 638.

³²² Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation, trans. by J.L.M. Haire and Ian Henderson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), pp. 192, 193.

the preacher and congregation. For this reason, Barth draws an *indissoluble* distinction between the creaturely form of the Church and her divine content. He points out that “[T]he form instituted by God is none the less only *form* and not the content of the service.... But while the work of *the Spirit* is taking place, use is made of this form and it is permitted to serve.”³²³ Hence, the crux of the matter is how and when does the work of the *Holy Spirit* take place? Barth’s solution for this question comes from his understanding of the unique *relation* between the *form* and *content* of the Church service from the perspective of the pattern of *περιχώρησις*. Essentially, the form and content of the Church service are inseparable as the Persons of the triune Godhead are perichoretically united and are not separable. Barth’s exposition of the Scottish Confession on this matter more clearly affirms the inseparable unity between the form and the content of the church service, referring to the Lord’s Supper as an example:

[T]he Scottish Confession had to draw attention in just as definite a way to the fact that the form of the Church service is *instituted by God* and therefore not to be separated from its *content*.... Once again through the service they render, we eat and drink the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ. It is certainly not with the mouth and the teeth that we do, but by *faith* and through the power of the *Holy Spirit*.³²⁴

Through the bipolar relation of the visible signs prepared by man and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the complementary union of the form and the content of the service brings forth a new reality, the Church service. As Barth claims, “Revelation and faith, the content of the church service, are not its form, but the content is not without the form, without the *signum* visible.”³²⁵ It is clear that Barth’s indissoluble distinction between the form and the content reveals the differentiated bipolar relationality between the form and content and provides people with a balanced understanding of the Church service by helping them not to pay overdue attention either to the form or to the content.

³²³ Barth, *The Knowledge of God and Service of God*, pp. 199, 200. (Italics mine)

³²⁴ Barth, *The Knowledge of God and Service of God*, pp. 200, 201. (Italics mine)

³²⁵ Barth, *The Knowledge of God and Service of God*, p. 201.

Twofold Pattern of the Concept of περιχώρησις Manifested in the Church

1. A Pattern of Vertical περιχώρησις

As was mentioned in relation to the doctrine of the God, the trinitarian concept of unity in diversity and diversity in unity is a basic and essential element in Christian thought.³²⁶ This concept is revealed in the relations among the local churches. The concept of the Holy Catholic Church is that the local community, with its local characteristics, cannot be another community in relation to others. Each in its own place can only be the one community beside which there are no others. Each in and for itself and with its local characteristics can only be the whole, as others are in their own locality. Barth explains that the unity in particularity and particularity in unity of local churches in relation to the Catholic Church is made possible only when “each community is grounded in the same Gospel, and awakened, maintained and ruled by the same Spirit.”³²⁷ The unity of the local communities with their own diversities will then be mutually confirmed in spite of the differences, because of the Word of God and the binding fellowship of the *Holy Spirit*. The Holy Catholic Church in the midst of diverse aspects of the local churches can be guaranteed only by the fact that each community is individually founded by the one Lord of all the communities, and constituted and ministered in obedience to His Spirit. For this reason, as Barth contends, “The one Church exists in its totality in each of the individual communities.”³²⁸

What takes place in the work of the Holy Spirit is the upbuilding of the Church. It seems that the Holy Spirit is instrumental in Christian love and therefore the existence of individual Christians, in and with this the upbuilding of the Christian community and therefore the existence of Christendom. However, according to Barth this only appears to be the case. Barth insists that “The individual person does not become a Christian, and live as such, in a vacuum, but

³²⁶ Cf. Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 88. Cf. Karl Barth, *Prologomena zur Christlichen Dogmatik: Die Lehre vom Worte Gottes* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1928), pp. 224, 229.

³²⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 672.

³²⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 673.

in a definite historical context, i.e., in and with the up-building of the Christian community. He does so,...in his specific *participation* in its up-building, and in the exercise of its faith, love, and hope.”³²⁹ Hence, the Church exists only in the common being and active participation, in faith, love and hope, of its members in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In virtue of this ministry, which is of divine origin and takes place for people and to them as the origin of their human action, we can think of the true Church that arises and continues in the twofold sense that God is at work and that there is a human work which He occasions and fashions.³³⁰ In this respect, we can notice that the dynamics of the perichoretic pattern are once again manifested in Barth’s exposition of the upbuilding of the Church. In the light of Barth’s thought, one can think of a dynamic of a vertical περιχώρησις in the relationship between *the Spirit* and His people. For instance, the Holy Spirit is the content, and human work is the form. Then, the Holy Spirit as the higher level marginally controls or organizes the lower level. Human work within the service at a lower level is responsive to, dependent upon, and points to the upper level, God. The important point is that in the light of Barth’s exposition, these two levels, divine action and human action, are not just interacting or separable; rather they are inseparable but distinguishable by being *interpenetrative* and *complementary*. The perichoretic nature of the relation between these two actions constitutes the true living Church. In the light of Barth’s exposition, the two levels, both divine work of the Holy Spirit and human work of the Christian, are qualitatively different from each other, yet inseparably and indispensably related in the Church. In other words, the two levels are integrated for a new way of being by forming an asymmetrical bipolar relationality in tension following the pattern of περιχώρησις.

However, in the vertical relationship, although following the pattern of περιχώρησις, the true origin and source comes only from above, from God. People are indispensable but only supply the conditions for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Barth insists that “The result of divine operation, the human

³²⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 614. (Italics mine)

³³⁰ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/2, pp. 616-617.

action which takes place in the true Church as occasioned and fashioned by God, will never try to be anything *in itself*, but only the divine operation, the divine work of sanctification, the upbuilding of Christianity by the *Holy Spirit* of Jesus the Lord, by which it is inaugurated and controlled and supported.”³³¹

In this way, Barth again reminds us of the unique role of the Spirit of God as the source of the orientation and focus that provides the principle of unity in the Church. In view of this, human action achieves nothing in itself unless it is united with the divine action of the Holy Spirit. The true Church arises and exists only as the Holy Spirit works and fashions the human deed. Consequently, the true Church is to reveal the essence of God, the mutual participation and indwelling in the light of the *analogia relationis*. The Church continues and exists only when the Spirit of God sanctifies people and their human work and builds up their work into the true Church. According to Barth:

[T]he only content of the Holy Spirit is Jesus; His only work is His provisional revelation; His only effect the human knowledge which has Him as its object (and in Him the knowing man himself). But as the self-attestation of Jesus the Holy Spirit is more than a mere indication of Jesus or record concerning Him. Where the man Jesus attests Himself in the power of the Spirit of God, He makes Himself present; and those whom He approaches in His self-attestation are able also to approach Him and to be near Him. More than that, where He makes Himself present in this power, He imparts Himself; and those to whom He wills to belong to Him.... It is in this way, by this self-attestation, self-representation and self-impartation, that He founds and quickens the community, which is the mighty work of the *Holy Spirit*.³³²

It is essentially Jesus Christ the Lord who is at work in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as the self-attestation of Jesus Christ is the quickening power by which Christianity is awakened and gathered and built up to a true living Catholic Church in time and space. However, Barth affirms that even though Jesus Christ is the Church and the Head of her body, the Church is not Jesus Christ because justification and sanctification of all men did not and does not take place in it.³³³ Jesus Christ is not bounded or limited by any condition of

³³¹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, pp. 616-617. (Italics mine)

³³² Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 654. (Italics mine)

³³³ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 655.

the community. Thus, He exercises absolute freedom in the community and provides the principle of unity of the community. Created and controlled only by Jesus Christ through His Spirit, the community receives Him and is obedient to Him in the Church.

2. A Pattern of Horizontal περιχώρησις

From the perspective of Barth's twofold sense of the upbuilding of the Church, on the other hand, it is clear that the Church is what is formed not only by God but also by her members. More specifically, if it is to be a true Church, it should be built by the members of the whole Church as well as by the apostles. When people are gathered into the Church, they are dedicated to the goal of all goals, and therefore their union (integration) must be total and complete and unconditional. Barth explains the particular characteristics of the union precisely in the following way:

Union in brotherhood is a solid union, but it is a union in freedom, in which the individual does not cease to be this particular individual, united in his particularity with every other man in his. In this context, upbuilding and therefore integration does not mean the erection of a smooth structure with no distinctive features, but of one in which the corners and edges of the individual elements used all fit together in such a way that they are not merely aesthetically harmonious but also exercise their technical function of mutual dependence and support. The establishment of a wholly positive relationship, in which the different pieces are fitted together, is thus the main problem in the construction of this building. It is love (for one's neighbour) which builds the community.³³⁴

The above statement reveals a pattern of the perichoretic co-inherence among Christians as the mode of Christian life, particularity in unity and unity in particularity without any confusion and loss of personal uniqueness, which directly reflects the very mode of the perichoretic unity of the three particular divine Persons. In the union of the brotherhood following the pattern of περιχώρησις, the love of God as the binding force of the community is indispensable, for it is the essence and the nature of God. Barth claims that "God's Being as He who lives and loves is Being in freedom. In this way, freely,

³³⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 635.

He lives and loves in freedom. And in this way, freely, He is God, and distinguishes Himself from everything else that lives and loves.”³³⁵ The Church reflects and manifests the essence of God that is God’s Being living and loving in freedom. The members of the Church as its constituents represent the essence of God through a loving union in freedom without losing their particular characteristics. This is nothing but a process of recovering *Imago Dei*, an analogy of a “togetherness in relation.”³³⁶ Consequently, the upbuilding of the community consists concretely in the fact that there is mutual love between the members of the community which is lived in by God through the Holy Spirit as its origin and focus which provides the principle of unity.

In the relationship and union of the brotherhood, we can think of a model of a horizontal and egalitarian περιχώρησις among its members. Within their relation and union, any type of domination or rigid hierarchy should not exist. They are unified in their mutual coordination only by the higher level, the Holy Spirit. Love as the brotherly love of Christians consists in the fact that, integrated by the Holy Spirit, they mutually adapt themselves to be one spiritual organism which can be used in the world in His service. Without this integration and mutual adaptation, there can be no reciprocal dependence and support. Each, with equal responsibility and honour, avoiding any rigid hierarchical tension or coercive domination, is required and enabled to be God’s fellow worker.

The Pattern of περιχώρησις as the Model of the Church Administration

In the New Testament, it is hard to find the existence of what might truly be called a political or managerial system of the Church which is superior to the local churches and the eternal guarantee of their unity as the body of Jesus Christ. By referring to Paul’s Epistles, Barth clarifies Paul’s status and relationship to the communities:

³³⁵ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 301.

³³⁶ In contrast to other explanations of “image” or “*eikōn*” in Genesis 1 as “reason”, “personality”, “responsibility”, or “original righteousness”, Barth interprets the word “*imago Dei*”

Paul came to the communities with a higher authority—but with that of the servant and, as a called apostle, of the unique and not the institutional servant of Jesus Christ. With this unique apostolic authority he speaks like the other first and direct witnesses to the Church of every age. But as, according to Gal. 1:1, he had received it “not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ”, so he exercises it simply in the fact that he makes the authority of Jesus Christ visible and audible in the Churches. He teaches and warns and beseeches “in Christ’s stead” (2 Cor. 5:2).³³⁷

Barth at this point seriously questions the validity of the rigid hierarchy which can be found in Roman Catholicism. Barth is right in his dealings with Paul’s authority over the local communities. According to his letters to the communities, the apostle Paul never played the role of a superior, even in relation to the heads of the individual communities. For this reason, Barth contends, “Thus the apostolicity of the Church cannot and must not be sought on historical and juridical grounds.”³³⁸ In addition, a rigid and rather authoritarian hierarchy is directly in contrast to the trinitarian mode of Being. As, according to Barth’s explanation, the Church is the action of God, it is supposed to postulate a *Vestigium dei*, the dynamics of the perichoretic Holy Tri-unity. Consequently, anything that is not in tune with this does not belong to the nature and essence of the true Church as the body of Jesus Christ. In this sense, no human being but only God can exercise any ruling over individual communities. Those who proclaim the authority of Jesus Christ are supposed to point only to Him and His Spirit as the origin and guarantee of their unity.

In the earthly form of the Church, it is true that a definite structure of hierarchical order exists in which its members and their works are ranked, with different levels of commitment and accomplishment. The only difference in nature from ordinary organizational structure is, as Barth contends, that “There are no superior and inferior functions and tasks, nor can there be a rigid hierarchy of those taking part but only a very flexible hierarchy corresponding to the directness

as an analogy of a “togetherness in relation” by confining the criterion of the interpretation of the word in the given text in “Karl Barth’s Table Talk”, p. 57.

³³⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 673.

³³⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 715.

with which each receives orders from the Lord Himself.”³³⁹ The Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in upbuilding His body, the true Church. It is He who concretely orchestrates all the activity of His people in the upbuilding of the Church, and who is Himself the derivation and determination of every human endeavour. Referring to Mat. 16:18, Barth affirms that “It is not Peter who builds. Peter, proven to be a disciple by his concession, serves as the rock on which, according to Mat. 7:25, a wise man will build. But it is Jesus Christ Himself who builds His Church.... In 1 Pet. 2:4-5 He is called the ‘living stone,’ and Christians themselves are ‘living stones’ which are built up in Him into an οἶκος πνευματικός.”³⁴⁰

The members of the Church serve the Church with different degrees of commitment. However, they all have to serve, and to do so in one place with the same prominence and obligation as others do at other places. In the organizational structure of the Church, each person has his or her own required service, and the service of each person is indispensable to that of the whole. Thus, there is something wrong with the existing structure of the Church itself if even one of its members is restricted in participating in the Church service.

Each one is called with equal seriousness, to play his part, and to do so as if everything depended on him.... Law and order in the community are never the particular priesthood of a few, but the universal priesthood of all believers (royal priesthood). It must avoid the fatal word “office” and replace it by “service” which can be applied to all Christians.³⁴¹

All Christians in the Church are equally qualified and commissioned to serve in this or that position, as appointed and called by the Lord. They are all royal priests in His sanctuary. Within these dynamics and the framework set by the Lord, any rigid hierarchical governing structure is not valid.

The Roman Catholic system consists of the church governing herself by means of an “ecclesiastical order”, represented by the whole body of bishops in their virtual submission to the sacrosanct authority of the pope, as the Vicar of

³³⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 631.

³⁴⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/2, pp. 633, 634.

³⁴¹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 694.

Christ and holder of what is claimed to be the Apostolic See.³⁴² In distinction from the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed system corresponds somewhat to the democratic idea of the state and looks upon the whole body of believers or the majority of believers who rule in the Church with sovereign authority. Nevertheless, Barth emphasizes that the government of the Church does not take place through men in either a monarchical or a democratic way but in the Word of God through the *Holy Spirit*. Barth claims:

By the Word of God, the Scottish Confession and the whole Reformed church means the *Holy Scriptures* of the Old and New Testaments, in so far as these Scriptures are the concrete form of Jesus Christ, His attestation and explanation through the prophets and apostles, the place where He Himself can be sought and found by any man at any time, the Voice of God's Holy Spirit which can be heard by any man at any time and therefore the source from which faith ever anew draws its knowledge of Jesus Christ and thus its knowledge of God.³⁴³

In its relationship to Him, Jesus is the "living law" of the Church.³⁴⁴ With respect to this "living law," all Christians who participate in the community in their own appointments must acknowledge Him as the foundation of the community and its government. The law of the Church, as spiritual law established and administered in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, proceeds from the Word of God.

It has to receive direction from the Bible. It is a matter of the Bible in which He is attested.... As in its teaching and life generally, it must always orientate itself by the life of the Lord in the Old and New Testament community as the first and original form of "brotherly Christocracy";.... In this sense Scripture (itself *norma normata*) is the *norma normans* of its inquiry concerning true Church law, and confessing law must be in practice the confession of the law of Jesus Christ attested in Scripture.³⁴⁵

With respect to Barth's understanding of the authority and value of Scripture, Scripture is not a mere age-old compilation of testimonies of men of God. For him, it is living and dynamic here and now to the Church and all Christians. The

³⁴² Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, p. 176.

³⁴³ Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, p. 177.

³⁴⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 710.

³⁴⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 683.

word of Scripture is still real and operative to its hearers like God's direct command and order on every occasion. Scripture here and now offers the Church an orientation and solidarity by attesting His active, immanent involvement in the Church.

In the light of Barth's exposition, Scripture is the ultimate foundation of Church administration. The ecclesiastical order and the congregation are not lords over it but organs serving it. "[W]ithin the bounds of this service to Scripture, the monarchical mode of government *cannot* have a priority in *principle* over the democratic, or vice versa."³⁴⁶ Thus, neither a particular ecclesiastical order of the whole assembly nor a majority of its members, but Holy Scripture alone has the right to possess and exercise sovereign power in the Church. Scripture must be the norm and model of the ecclesiastical order and administration. However, on the other hand, Barth does not negate the authority of the Councils or of the human agents for Church administration in general. He claims that "The Word of God which governs the Church requires her to justify her actions again and again to it."³⁴⁷ The true government of the Church takes place only through the Word of God by His quickening power, the Holy Spirit.

Even though the Church makes concrete decisions in her historical form, she does this not as a ruler, but as a servant of God. Therefore, each church member can only be a servant of the Lord in dealings with church administration, acknowledging the Word of God as supreme in all matters. Barth defines church service as human action in relation to the divine Word in the following way:

In the Church, to act means *to hear*, i.e. to hear the Word of God, and through the Word of God revelation and faith.... It is by listening to God, that she serves Him and it is by listening together to God that her members serve one another, as of course they must do. It is by hearing God that the Church is built up, lives, grows, works and glorifies God's name in her own midst and in the world. She is the true Church in proportion as she is the listening church.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, p. 186.

³⁴⁷ Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, p. 182.

³⁴⁸ Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, p. 210.

In this view, “listening to the Word of God” is the way of serving the Lord and letting Him rule His body. “Listening to the Word of God” is also the way of serving each member of the Church. “Listening to the Word of God” guarantees the authenticity of the true Church. The task of hearing the Word of God is the goal of the Church and the universal responsibility of the believers without any different levels of value. As royal priests, all the members are commissioned to hear the Divine Word. For this reason, there should be no demarcation between clergy and laymen in the Church. As Barth insists, “The distinction between the holders of a special office and the remaining members of the congregation, between the teaching church and the hearing church—the *ecclesia docens* and the *ecclesia audiens*—can be only a *technical* distinction and not one of principle.”³⁴⁹

Bipolar relationality between the Holy Spirit and His People in the Light of *Analogia actionis*

Barth’s exposition of the act of redemption reveals that the gathering work of the Holy Spirit is a dynamic and reciprocal event that takes place in the realm of human action, the Church in the world. The impetus that can be perceived in the redeeming action of the Holy Spirit and the divinely proffered relationship with sinful man is an indispensable constituent of the very being of the Christian Church. The description of the redeeming action of the Holy Spirit in dialectical and three-dimensional terms characterises Barth’s unique approach in defining the *being* of the Church. In order to explain one aspect, Barth always refers to other elements that are directly adjacent and relevant. Knowing this approach may help one to understand Barth’s unique way of elaborating the multi-dimensional characteristics of the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit and its direct effect on the being of the Church. This approach also reflects the essence of God, the trinitarian hypostasis of Godhead, and is paradoxical but indispensable in understanding Barth’s way of developing his unique complementarily dialectical perspective.

³⁴⁹ Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, p. 213. (Italics mine)

With respect to the complementary relation between being and act, Barth states that the Church “takes place, that is to say, only as it is gathered and lets itself be gathered and gathers itself by the living Jesus Christ through the *Holy Spirit*. To describe its being we must abandon the usual distinctions between *being and act*, status and dynamic, essence and existence. Its act is its being, its status its dynamic, its essence its existence.”³⁵⁰ According to Barth, the Church is initially gathered, constituted, and validated by the awakening power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus the Lord. At the same time, the Church as a divinely ordained community takes place among sinful, totally depraved men in and through human action. Thus, the Church is gathered by the sovereign lordship of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. Yet, she also gathers in the earthly historical form that takes place as a sequence and a nexus of existential human activities. These human activities can be a reciprocal and mutually dependent event in the Holy Spirit in time and space. Thus, for Barth, it is natural to say that “The community is the earthly-historical *form* of existence of Jesus Christ Himself. The time has now come to adopt the New Testament term used to describe this matter. The Church is His Body, created and continually renewed by the awakening power of the *Holy Spirit*.”³⁵¹

Jesus Christ also lives at the right hand of the Father as the advocate and intercessor for all men. However, He does not live apart from His Church in time and space. The way Jesus Christ exists is inclusive, not only as an intercessor in the heavenly place, but also as the Head of His body in the earthly place, the Church. And it is the body that has its Head in Him. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ, and simultaneously Jesus Christ belongs to the Church. As Barth claims, “Because He is, it is; it is, because He is. That is its secret, its being in the third dimension, which is visible only to faith.”³⁵² Human action in the Church does not arise spontaneously from the spirit of the men united in it, but from their awakening by the Holy Spirit. Its sole basis and truth and continuance are therefore in the choice and decision, the work and the living Word of Jesus Christ.

³⁵⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 650. (Italics mine)

³⁵¹ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 661.

³⁵² Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 661.

According to Barth's exposition of the nature of the Church and her relationship to the Lord Jesus, its living Head, "The concept of the body of Christ necessarily comprehends the perception of the being of the community as visible in faith."³⁵³ Based on this insight, Barth expounds the four famous predicates given to the Church in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381): *una, sancta, catholica*, and *apostolica*. I will now set out how Barth interprets and applies these four characteristics along with the dynamics of the perichoretic Trinity in the ecclesiastical context.

1. *Credo unam ecclesiam.*

The *Credo unam ecclesiam* signifies the oneness of the Church in the midst of the particularity of its individual members. This creed is wholly based on the biblical reference Ephesians 4: 1-7.³⁵⁴ So, how should one understand the historically existing Christian "churches" which are geographically separated and therefore different congregations? The geographically distinguished communities, the local churches with their distinctive local characteristics, are not essentially different communities in relation to one another. Barth explains this aspect in the following manner:

Each in its own place can only be the one community beside which there are no others. Each in and for itself and with its local characteristics can only be the whole, as others are in their own locality.... This one community is grounded in the same Gospel, and awakened and maintained and ruled by the same Spirit, although as the community of the same Lord it exists at one and the same time in Thessalonica, Galatia, Corinth and Rome.... Each of these individual communities in relation to the concrete event of its gathering is called and trusted and expected by the One who is over them all to be the community of the Lord in its own locality, immediately and directly in the fullness of the gifts and the corresponding responsibility given to it.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 668.

³⁵⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 668. Ephesians 4:1-7. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

³⁵⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 672.

The essential driving force that unifies each community, regardless of its geographical distinction and separation, its environment, tradition, language, and other local characteristics, is the one universal sovereign Lord who constitutes and ordains all the communities. Each local community is connected with one universal Head that constitutes one complete universal community which is mutually attested and affirmed in spite of the differences. Thus, when one refers to the existence of the one Church, it must be understood “in its totality in each of the individual local communities.”³⁵⁶ Here Barth reveals that the Church, with respect to the One God, has her own unique mode of being, which is similar to the dynamics of the trinitarian mode of the divine Being.

The Lord Jesus, who has promised to be in the midst of every community gathered by Him and in His name, rules the Church and therefore the churches in His Spirit as the Head of the body. He is the foundational ground and guarantor of the unity of all the local communities. Consequently, as Barth claims:

There is no justification theological, spiritual or biblical for the existence of a plurality of Churches genuinely separated in this way and mutually excluding one another internally and therefore externally. A plurality of Churches in this sense means a plurality of lords, of spirits, of gods. There is no doubt that to the extent that Christendom does consist of actually different and opposing Churches, to that extent it denies practically what it confesses theoretically—the unity and the singularity of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit.³⁵⁷

In the realization of faith in the one Church in face of its disunity, mutual tolerance and submission to one another are indispensable. Only when each local church humbly listens to and serves the others, is its true identity with the one body of the Lord Jesus, to be the only one Church, manifested. The chronic tendency towards mutual exclusion and rejection among local churches must be jettisoned in order to manifest the unity and harmony of one true Church of the Lord Jesus.

³⁵⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 673.

³⁵⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 675.

2. *Credo sanctam ecclesiam*

The Christian Church tradition confesses that the Church is holy. The Church is the earthly-historical form of Jesus Christ in the reconciling action of the Holy Spirit that is wholly in the sovereign lordship of its Lord. Jesus Christ through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit makes the holiness of each church holy and acknowledges it as such. The redeeming work of the Holy Spirit makes the earthly historical Christian community commensurable with the holy community of Jesus Christ. Consequently, a sinful and depraved human person becomes its holy member. As Barth claims, "When we believe in Jesus Christ, presupposing that we are in the community which is before us and that we live within it, we are required to accept as a working hypothesis that other members as well as ourselves can be holy and not unholy; not on the basis of their own thought and will and action, but as those who are separated by the Lord of the Community and therefore genuinely, as real Christians."³⁵⁸ With respect to the holiness of the Church, the Church or its members cannot make themselves holy by their own deeds or accomplishment. The Church can never make itself holy by human toil alone. The holiness of the Church is not a goal attainable by or duty given to its members. It is not within the human capacity to achieve this. The question of its holiness can be answered only with reference to the holiness of its Head. The basis of its holiness is its living Head, Jesus the Christ, present to it as the Head of His body and acting in it and to it in His Spirit.

Many human operations are commonly visible in the Church and in its activities which are conspicuously unholy and far from its theoretical confession, but the Church and its members become holy under the umbrella of God's gracious act of sanctification and reconciliation. Eventually, the creed of the holy Church reveals the close relation of human agents with his Lordship. Man's nature is essentially sinful. Yet man with his sinful nature is transmuted into holy being when he participates by faith in the proffered redeeming action of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. The holiness procured for the Church and its members in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ also reveals the complete eschatological

³⁵⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 699.

consummation of the earthly-historical Church and its members with the Lord Jesus in the *έσχατον*.

3. *Credo catholicam ecclesiam*

The *Credo catholicam ecclesiam* is one of the multi-dimensional aspects that constitute the true Church. The dynamics that drive and validate the oneness and holiness of the Church make the Church universal. The character of the Church imparted by Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit cannot be degraded in time and space. Its character is recognizable in the sameness that exists and shows it to be the true Church, the Church of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever rules the Church as its Head in His Spirit. Consequently, the Church as the body of Jesus Christ receives its universality from the Head.

Christians will always be Christian first, and only then members of a specific culture or state or class or the like. Similarly in all these different spheres the Church must always be the Church first, and only then, in the first instance in the advocacy of its own cause, and to that extent always with a certain alienation, can it enter into positive relationships with these other spheres.³⁵⁹

As the Head is not changeable in time and space, the Church, in relation to its Head, is ubiquitous regardless of its cultural, geographical and historical differences. However, the universality of the Church does not refer to a totalitarian uniformity without its own particularity. The crux of the precept is the matter of sequential order in the formation of the Christian community. “The Christian is first a member of the Christian community and only then, and as such, this individual Christian in his particular Christian being and nature and presence. And this means that the Christian faith is first the faith of the Christian community and only then as such, affirmed and shared by them, the faith of the men united in it.”³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 703.

³⁶⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 705.

The catholicity of the Church signifies that the Christian community is one and the same in essence in all places, in all ages, within all societies, and in relation to all its members. Hence, as Barth claims, “I believe that it can be the Christian community only in this identity, and therefore that it is its task to maintain itself in this identity, and therefore in this identity to will to be and continually to become and to remain, the Christian community, and nothing else, and therefore the true Church in all these dimensions.”³⁶¹ However, the catholicity of the Church is perceptible only in faith just as without faith one cannot see its unity or holiness. The catholicity of the Church is not physically observable among the local churches manifested in the earthly, historical forms in the corporeal world. Jesus the Lord makes the Church one and holy and universal in a non-corporeal sense. It must be understood in the spiritual realm. And therefore faith in Him that is the nexus to the spiritual dimension is “the only effective and not really passive but supremely active realization of *the credo catholicam ecclesiam*.”³⁶²

4. *Credo apostolicam ecclesiam*

According to some ecclesiastical traditions, to stand in the stream of the apostolic succession is to be in a Church which is automatically proven to be a true Church because its offices are attached to this line and therefore to the succession guaranteed by it. Certainly, the clergy have a part in the apostolic grace of office which, through the centuries, has passed from one hand to another. In this case, apostolicity and true Church are matters that can be known by reference to a transmitted enrolment of bishops, which can be proven by reference to historical documentation.³⁶³ Barth questions the validity of the ritualised tradition of the apostolicity of the Church sought only on historical and juridical grounds. The concept of the apostolicity grounded historically and juridically gives Barth the impression of absence of vitality and dynamics, it cannot help

³⁶¹ Barth, C.D. IV/1, pp. 707-708.

³⁶² Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 712.

³⁶³ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 715.

delimiting the absolute authority and freedom of God and His action in a rigid man-made framework.

In view of what Barth mentioned before, divine action that is free and absolute in nature cannot be created and controlled by any kind of human will or deed. As all the apostles, as well as Paul, were appointed by the Lord, apostolic authority and power are the work and gift of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God institutes and transmits apostolicity at His free will. In this perspective, apostles are not in any sense the rulers of the community who practise some authoritarian role in relation to the communities. Only Jesus Christ makes use of His servants by calling and anointing them. Their authority, power, and mission are founded and commissioned by Jesus Christ, the head of the Community, at His free will. The vital, authentic apostolicity of the Church comes only from above, from the Spirit of God, not from human authority or institution. Only through divine action does the Church become a true Church. Barth explains:

According to the witness of Scripture, He is not absent but present in the midst. He may be represented by one or many, but He does not need any vicar, either in the form of individuals, or in that of a group, or in that of the totality or the majority of the community. He needs Christians who will be only His servants. The order of the true apostolic Church and its administration can always be recognized by the fact that this is taken into account.³⁶⁴

Barth himself is well aware of the problems occurring in the Church when it employs common political and juridical systems of the world, such as a monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic form of constitution. All these forms have their own risks that imperil the true nature of the Church. The Church may have predilection for this or that configuration suitable for its own situations, but as it does so it will always be aware that it is only He who has the right and power to govern the Church and constitute its apostolicity, not any man or men even as His representatives.

³⁶⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 723.

The Church possesses true apostolicity only when she executes her given mission, which is proclaiming the Word of God. The apostles attested in Scripture are the ones who were sent to preach the Gospel in the World.

As an apostolic Church, the Church exists only as it exercises the ministry of herald. It builds up itself and its members in the common hearing of the Word of God which is always new, in common prayer, in baptism, and the Lord's Supper, in the practice of its inner fellowship, in theology.... If it is the apostolic Church determined by Scripture and therefore by the direction of the apostles, it cannot fail to exist in this freedom and therefore in relation to itself. And when it does, it cannot fail to be recognizable and recognized as apostolic and therefore as the true Church.³⁶⁵

Whatever the political system of the Church may be, its form must be efficient to accelerate and execute its goal of witnessing to the Word of God. This is the way of perpetuating the Church's apostolicity as attested in the Bible. The transmission of the list of bishops does not guarantee the apostolic succession of the Church. Only when the Word of God is preached is the Spirit of God present and in action. This mission was commissioned to the apostles and to the members of the whole Church. The responsibility of witnessing the Word of God is equally given to every constituent of the Church. The Church is apostolic and therefore catholic when it exists on the basis of Scripture and in conformity with it.

Barth insists that the oneness, holiness, and catholicity of the Church are recognized only on the basis of "faith." These are especially sought on invisible and spiritual grounds. Here, in dealing with the apostolicity of the Church, Barth questions the apostolicity of the Church established only on historical and juridical grounds. Moreover, in the procedure of transmitting its apostolicity, he doubts the presence of the living and dynamic action of the Holy Spirit which is indispensable for preserving the apostolicity of the Church.

The True Church and Its Upbuilding: Bipolar relationality between the Holy Spirit and His People

In virtue of the gathering of the Christian community by the power of the *Holy Spirit*, the birth of the true Church takes place in time and space, but, at the

³⁶⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/1, pp. 724, 725.

same time, it requires human existential action or work. In other words, as Barth expresses the dynamics of the relationship between divine action of the Holy Spirit and earthly and existential forms of human action, “[T]he true Church truly is and arises and continues and lives in the *twofold sense that God is at work and that there is a human work which He occasions and fashions*.”³⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, in the light of Barth’s concept of the “twofold sense” of invisible divine action and corporeal human action, neither action can be counted less than the other even though the action of the Holy Spirit plays an initiating role in the mystical event; each action is indispensable with respect to upbuilding and perpetuating the Church. In this way, Jesus Christ builds a close relationship with men and invites them to join in the divine action of building up His body manifested in historical, corporeal form.

Barth defines the existence of the Church as the integration of its members with one another in the love of Christ. This integration is imparted by the Holy Spirit to the apostles and the members of the community in the form of a total and unconditional union in brotherhood. In order to be a true Church, the integration of its members must be present whenever they are gathered and gather into the community. This union in brotherhood thus requires of its members a mutual submission and recognition with their own particularities. According to Barth:

[T]he upbuilding of the community consists concretely in the fact that there is mutual love between the members of the community which is loved by God, by Jesus as its Lord.... [L]ove as the brotherly love of Christians (with no sentimental under-notes) consists in the fact that, integrated by God, by Jesus, they mutually adapt themselves to be one organism which can be used in the world in His service.³⁶⁷

With regard to the upbuilding of the community, the integration in brotherhood and mutual adaptation among the members bring forth the dynamics of reciprocal dependence and support in their relationships with one another. In this realm, no one is superior or inferior. No one dominates or subordinates. In its life and

³⁶⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 616. (Italics mine)

³⁶⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 636.

worship, the union in love must be made in mutual dependence and support that is an indispensable presupposition in the process of upbuilding the true Church.

The process of integration of the community in its totality becomes a concrete event in time and space. As all the constituents of the community actively participate in the work, it becomes a general “integration” in a basic equality of receptivity and freedom. As Barth claims, “[T]hey are summoned in the power of the Holy Spirit of their risen Lord to look forward together to His future manifestation and their own *eschaton*, they are commonly set in motion in the direction of the goal of their edification as given and set for the community at the end of the last time.”³⁶⁸ As the integration of the community arises in the realm of human action and moves toward a complete consummation under the direction and call of the Lord Jesus through His Spirit, the upbuilding of the community is not static or accidental; it is dynamic and teleological in reconciling divine action and the indispensable active participation of its members with a common goal.

1. The Order of the Church

Barth develops and expounds his own understanding of the order of the community with solid reference to Holy Scripture and its authority. The relation of the community to the Lord and His Word constitutes the overall framework of the order of the community. The first and foremost step that men have to take is to pay attention to and recognize the Head of the community who is the regulative Supporter of their relationship to Him. As Jesus the Head of the community constitutes and rules it with His sovereign lordship in the Holy Spirit, the order of the community is not institutional or juridical, but “spiritual” in nature. As Barth contends, “[T]he law of the Church must be ‘spiritual’ law in the strict sense of the term, i.e., a law which is to be sought and found and established and administered in the fellowship of the *Holy Spirit* of Jesus Christ.”³⁶⁹ In virtue of listening and orienting oneself to the Word of God revealed and attested in

³⁶⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 639.

³⁶⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 682.

Scripture, one can develop the spiritual fellowship with the Lord Jesus in His Spirit which is the foundational ground of the true order of the community. In this sense, the order induced and constituted with reference to Scripture reveals the sovereign power and will of Jesus and becomes the true controlling precept.

Barth initially introduces the law of service with respect to the Pauline theology of the Church as the Body of Christ. He claims that “The community of Jesus Christ as the body of which He is the Head, exists as it serves Him. And its members, Christians, as members of His body, exist as—united by the service which they render to their Lord—they serve one another. This first and decisive determination of all Church law has its basis in the fact that the Lord Himself, who rules the community as the Head of His body, ‘came not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ (Mk. 10:45).”³⁷⁰ Service performed by the members is the very essence and being of the community. Service corresponding to the Word of God becomes the unique driving force of the existence of the Church.

The law of service in the ecclesiastical context reflects the immanent relationship of the trinitarian Persons and helps its members recover their true image by engaging with and indwelling in one another through mutual submission in the Church. As service is indispensable with regard to the being of the Church, the law of service is universal in essence. This law is not confined under any circumstances or sphere of the Church’s activity. In effect, to be true members of the community, all must serve one another by mutual liberation for participation in the service of the whole. Service is literally the true mode of existence within the community of Jesus Christ.

However, service cannot be a mandatory requirement for obtaining membership of the community. It is a purely voluntary action of its members in their freedom; it is a natural response of man as a con-subsisting being in the community. As Barth claims, “To be a Christian, and therefore a saint in the communion of saints, is to serve in and with the Christian community. All Christians do not have to serve equally, i.e., in the same function. But they all have to serve, and to do so in one place with the same eminence and responsibility

³⁷⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 690.

as others do at other places.”³⁷¹ Every member of the community is qualified and instituted to serve in this or that sphere, with inevitable distinctions in function and responsibility. The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to its members in accordance with His free will. Consequently, as Barth insists, “There is no possibility of a departmental isolation and autonomy or a struggle for power and prestige; that with all the respect for particular gifts and tasks and their limits the responsibility of all for all and for the whole is maintained and asserted.”³⁷²

The order of the community is living and dynamic as its Head the Lord Jesus is living and dynamic yesterday, today, and forever. “His person as attested in Holy Scripture lives to-day and to-morrow in all its historical singularity. And as this living person, He rules and upholds and orders His community; He Himself at every moment in the quickening power of the *Holy Spirit*.”³⁷³ As Church law is living and dynamic, it will always have to be eschatological and teleological in nature. It will always have to move forward to constant renovation and improvement in response to revelation, the Word of God. If the law does not remain engaged in this movement, it becomes rigid and static and then loses its true nature as appropriate to a living and active Church in the earthly-historical form. As Barth argues, “If it is always and everywhere a matter of living Church law, there can be a tolerable and meaningful and fruitful relationship between differently constituted and ordered Churches in different historical situations and different points on the way.”³⁷⁴ Its law is not rigid, but fluid, as the Spirit moves and administers in His will toward the final consummation in Jesus Christ. Essentially, the living and dynamic nature of the law is useful for checking the balances of the administrative offices within the Church. Ultimately, this character helps Christians and local churches to be respectful to and tolerant of one another by way of eliminating the sense of superiority of certain church traditions or organizational structures and credal standpoints.

³⁷¹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 693.

³⁷² Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 695.

³⁷³ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 710. (Italics mine)

³⁷⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/2, p. 717.

2. Perpetuation of the Church

How does the Christian community exist and perpetuate its existence within the world? There are many different types of organizations and groups of people organized for sharing common political, social, ethnic, and religious aims. They usually gather and unite in a form of union or a group with common goals and interests that are the major driving force guaranteeing and perpetuating their union and fellowship. In this perspective, the Christian community seems to be an autonomously gathered and united group of people with a social impulse derived from their common situation, faith and community. However, the natural need of union and cooperation felt by those who share a common aim is not what makes Christians gather together, nor what constitutes the community. Each individual Christian does not become a Christian through the impulsion and power of his religious and moral disposition, but only by virtue of the fact that Jesus Christ calls him and thus unites him with Himself and other men. Jesus Christ Himself calls these individuals in their plurality and unites them with one another as one community. Barth explains the relation between God and man with respect to the perpetuation of the Church in the midst of the world in the following manner:

The community exists as the people called by Jesus Christ and created by His call on the basis of the fact that first, i.e., in the God's eternal election of grace, He has made Himself its Head and therefore made it ("elect in Him," Eph. 1:4) His body, so that He now exists as its Head, as such is its Lord, and as such acts and works in and on it in the enlightening power of His Holy Spirit, and it for its part has its being, the being of His body, in and with His being as its Head.³⁷⁵

With the impulse of the calling of Jesus Christ and His unifying work, people join together with a common and therefore a mutual responsibility accepted and borne together in the community. Christians are always members of the body of Jesus Christ, set in the sphere of the one brotherhood constituted by the one lordship, in the one community organized and perpetuated by Him as the Lord who chooses and calls them all out of the world. As Barth says:

Just as the Holy Spirit, as Himself an eternal divine 'person' or mode of being, as the Spirit of the Father and the Son (*qui ex Patre Filioque*

³⁷⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 753.

procedit), is the bond of peace between the two, so in the historical work of reconciliation He is the One who constitutes and guarantees the unity of the first and the second predicates, of the primary and the secondary dimensions and forms of existence of His being. He is the one who constitutes and guarantees the unity in which He is at one and the same time the heavenly Head with God and earthly body with His community.³⁷⁶

The Christian community is inaugurated and maintained by the sovereign power of its Head in His Spirit, yet its existence is totally dependent on, “its environment and yet also in total freedom in relation to it. Neither its dependence nor its freedom is partial; they are both total.”³⁷⁷

When Jesus summons His people in the midst of world-occurrence, He has a purpose for both His chosen people and for the world. The relationship He develops with His people in the community is not exclusive against the world. He teaches and gives them a message to impart to the world in the corporeal form of communication. Christians in this sense have to use media which are shared with the world. Consequently, they cannot avoid employing the systems of thought and speech and their spatial and temporal reality. Thus, the community and its members have to subject themselves to the conditions and restrictions implicit in these systems. In the process of executing its mission of testimony, the community is restricted and conditioned by the secularity of language; yet it can exercise total freedom under the circumstances resting in the freedom of the sovereign Word through His grace. Barth contends, “The freedom of the Christian community in this sphere of speech has its origin in the free omnipotent Word of the grace of God which it is charged to attest. It has no control over this Word. But this Word has supreme control over it, and in the exercise of this control, this Word makes its word a free word.”³⁷⁸ What the community has to do is to serve and attest the Word of God which addresses itself in different places to different men at different times. It summons them out of their isolation, calls, brings, binds, and unites them both invisibly with God and visibly with one another. Hence, its existence and perpetuation come from what He is in relation to

³⁷⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 760.

³⁷⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 734.

³⁷⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 736.

the community in the world. The Lord Jesus is the ground and the existence of the community itself. In other words, the community takes place in the reconciling act of His Holy Spirit that coordinates the different elements and constitutes and guarantees their unity. The gracious act of Jesus in His Holy Spirit initiates and perpetuates the witness of his people in world-occurrence. In virtue of this gracious reconciling divine action, the community becomes always true and actual, as the Head does not live without His body or the body without its Head. The Head, Jesus Christ, lives with and in His community and the body. His community lives with and in Him alone.

3. The Ministry in the Form of Speech

According to Barth's exposition, the ministry of the community in its verbal form can be characterized into six major elements: the declaration of the gospel, its explanation, application, evangelisation, mission and theology. First, Barth claims that the ministry of the community is manifested in the form of the declaration of the Gospel in all times and spaces:

Whatever else the community may plan, undertake and do, whatever else it may or may not accomplish, it has always to introduce into the sphere of world-occurrence and to disclose to men a human historical fact which, not itself the kingdom of God but indicating it as a likeness, corresponds and points to the divine historical fact which constitutes the content of the Gospel.³⁷⁹

The community is not a mere ordinary organization constituted by a certain group of people with common interests or goals that are exclusive and intra-active in nature. All the actions and works executed within the community are supposed to be geared toward the world and its people in the form of proclaiming what has been revealed to itself. The proclamation of the Word of God is the first and most important ministry of the community given to it by its Lord Jesus Christ. The ministry of proclamation of the Gospel reveals the true nature and status of the community. The point of the ministry does not lie in planning and executing

³⁷⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 844.

projects and missions successfully by itself, but in introducing and pointing to what God has done in relation to the world and all human beings in history.

The point is that alongside and over against everything else that takes place in the world the witness of the community also occurs, that what God says in the Gospel concerning what He has done and does and is for man is accepted, answered and proclaimed by certain men. It is not in the power of the community to produce or even to reproduce the divine historical fact God has created and reveals it, that He is actively and eloquently present in it.³⁸⁰

As a witness of God's reconciling action for the world, the community has simply to disclose and introduce the Gospel to men in the relational form of proclamation. Its ministry of proclamation is not measured on the basis of the success or failure of its given mission. The community cannot convince men and make them Christian. It totally depends on the God who has the hegemony of the ministry of reconciliation and revelation. The foremost responsible action of the community is merely to proclaim the on-going reconciling action of God to the world in history. Essentially, the Word of God that is living and dynamic is the author and subject of the Gospel and the community's ministry of proclamation. Hence, the community is not the author of the Gospel or the leader of the ministry, yet has a special relationship with the Word and its reconciling divine action. In other words, it is a free agent that provides a mediating nexus between the self-revealing Word of God and the ignorant world.

In relation to the ministry of proclamation of the Gospel, the community has a divinely commissioned task of hermeneutical explanation of the revealed truth, the Gospel. Along with the ministry of proclamation of the Gospel, the community has to explain and unfold the Word of God and make it perceptible to men. It should be mediated and explained to the world by the community's human action and skill.

The Gospel gives itself to be understood, and wills to be understood. Hence, the human historical fact which corresponds to its content, and which it is the task of the ministry of the community to introduce, consists in the declaration of the Gospel but also in its explanation. It has to follow

³⁸⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 844.

the elucidation which constantly issues from the self-declaration of Jesus Christ, from the content of the Gospel itself.³⁸¹

In this sense, there are two fundamental elements in dealing with the explication of the Gospel to the world. First, the self-revealing act of the Word of God makes itself known. Secondly, the faithful obedience of the community following objectively a given framework of *interpretation* revealed within the Word of God itself. In the former case, Barth argues that “the self-enunciating content of the Gospel does not permit a mere unfruitful acquaintance....It is not itself empty in its encounter with the community. It develops, articulates, and explains itself.”³⁸² The living and dynamic Word of God is the very action of God that speaks for itself and unfolds and points to its own meaning and purpose. The Word of God does not come to the world when it is proclaimed through the ministry of the community as an unarticulated and ambiguous assertion, but as a developed and intelligible content. The revealed truth in history itself is self-explanatory and sufficiently perceptible to men.

Secondly, Barth argues of the ministry of explication that, “the self-enunciating content of the Gospel does not permit any autonomous explanation, i.e., any interpretation other than according to its own direction and from its own chosen standpoint.”³⁸³ The ministry of explication requires the community to follow its own hermeneutical framework which is to listen carefully to the self-revealing action of God. The community must first pay attention to the Word’s own articulation and explanation as it is revealed to the community. Thus, its explanation does not depend on the community’s own capricious interpretation in different contexts, but on the self-revealing action of the Word and its given framework of interpretation. As the community listens to and obeys the Word, it gives insight into the nature, existence and activity of God, the covenant and the divine work of reconciliation with all.

Thirdly, Barth deals with a concrete medium with which the community can witness and explain the Word of God. The Word of God cannot be

³⁸¹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, pp. 846-847.

³⁸² Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 847.

³⁸³ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 847.

proclaimed or manifested in a meaningless or unintelligible form. The ministry of proclamation and explication of the Word depends on and stands in close relation to concrete human action manifested in the forms of speech: praising and preaching. For Barth, in dealing with the form of the Church's ministry, its action cannot be carried out apart from speech. The first form of the community's action of speech Barth brings forth is "to praise God" with the human voice (*vox humana*). As the most concrete public form of liturgical manifestation in its ministry, praise provides orientation and form for the whole action and meaning of divine service.³⁸⁴ The community has an ultimate purpose for the world as well as itself when it expresses praise in public form. Barth explains the purpose in the following manner:

To its fulfilment there belong not only preaching and prayer, which for their part cannot be well done without the praise of God... fashioned under the control of the affirmation, acknowledgement, and approval, not of any god, but of Emmanuel, so that it takes the form of worthy and salutary confession; and therefore even more particularly as the element in which the community says expressly to itself and the world that the main concern in its whole existence, and therefore its assembling too, is with this affirmation and confession.³⁸⁵

The praise of God as an active and most noble form of human expression and confession of the Word is an indispensable medium of application in the ministry of the community. Praise as a human action calls on God and His presence in the midst of the definite human action of the praising event. It essentially creates a *sui generis* locus in which human action can freely participate and co-inhere in the relation of divine action. The perichoretic union of the two qualitatively different actions occurs in this integrated locus of the community. In the event of praise, divine action and human action are not just interacting or separable but interpenetrative and distinguishable from each other. This perichoretic union between divine action and human action creates a new and true mode of being of the community in time and space. One cannot think of human action economically manifested in the form of event apart from divine ordination of it,

³⁸⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 865.

³⁸⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 866.

and vice versa. Divine participation in the event of human praising action makes the event valid and worthy to man himself. This point makes the praise of the community drastically different from any other types of music or musically manifested human action and event.

Praise as a human action does not in itself achieve or give any meaning or life. Only God's participation in the event gives life and meaning to it. Opposing any type of tacit premise of its ministry, the community proclaims and concretely delivers its given message of the Word to itself and the world. Praise as an existential mode of the community, as Barth claims, "seeks to bind and commit and therefore to be expressed, to well up and be sung in concert."³⁸⁶ Praise as the community's mode of being is not an individual, exclusive action or an occasional event. It is a group-oriented communal event sung together without ceasing. However, it should not become a mere mumbling repetition of old and fixed text. Rather, as an eventful action, praise must always be living and dynamic in the divine service heard openly by the world.

Another form of human expression in the ministry of proclamation and explication is preaching. It is indispensable, concrete human action. Through the medium of the human voice, the community can make known the revealed Word of God. In a way, its own form of manifestation constantly builds and perpetuates its own body and existence. Preaching requires a definite human action and medium, yet it is not preaching of the human being. To be valid and true preaching, it requires a co-inherent relation with divine action in the same way as the praise of the community. Barth argues this aspect in the following manner:

True preaching is, in fact, preaching of Jesus Christ, of the radical alteration of the situation between God and man, between heaven and earth, as it has been effected in Him. Hence by the content of its declaration preaching is at once and primarily distinguished from all other forms of human declaration and communication.... It takes place in concrete connexion with the original witness concerning Jesus Christ and therefore the kingdom of God.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 865.

³⁸⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 868.

As the divine ordination makes the praising event meaningful and worthy, preaching obtains its true meaning and divine affirmation through God's active involvement in its content. This involvement of both divine action and human action sets its operation apart from all other practices of human assertion or speech. Preaching is divinely-ordained holy human action geared toward the world. The complementary relation between divine action and human action inherent in the preaching ministry is originated and determined by the Holy Spirit. According to Barth:

The Christian must also be exercised, however, in the act of Christian thinking as it is to be demonstrated *libro clauso*, in the fulfilment of decisive movement from the centre to the periphery and back to the centre, from above energetically down and no less energetically up again.... The Holy Spirit, who is true and proper *doctor ecclesiae* creating faith as well as giving information and therefore establishing real knowledge, sets up in the community the specific and sober ministry of instruction.³⁸⁸

Preaching as a dynamic movement appeals to various levels of people. It enlightens people and imparts concrete information and knowledge to them with reference to the Bible. However, preaching as human action cannot be anything by itself, unless its ministry is validated through divine operation, divine inspiration, and divine revelation through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sanctifies and affirms the human action of preaching. Divine participation is the living and active driving force of the ministry that is immanent within it. It invigorates and gives life to the ministry. Thus, the Spirit of God, as the origin of the orientation and focus that provide the principle of the ministry, is the true Upholder and true Supporter of the Church and its ministry.

As the fourth aspect of the ministry of the community, Barth deals with evangelisation as a self-renewing operation. Unlike the ministry of preaching that is mainly directed to the world and non-believers, evangelisation is for the "nominal Christians" who live under the influence of Christianity and its ministry. The nominal Christians know what Christianity is, and its teaching is heard somehow and some way in proximity to the community. Barth claims:

³⁸⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 871.

It is obvious that the worship, preaching and teaching of the community, which the world also hears in some sense, or at least may hear, in its form as the Christian world, must always have also the character of evangelisation, of a call to those who are within in theory but not in practice.... Those countless nominal Christians are undoubtedly the immediate neighbours of the community as the assembly of serious Christians.³⁸⁹

The major task of the evangelisation, thus, is to lead inactive Christians to participate in the Church and its ministry practically. The nominal Christians are those who merely know Christianity in theoretico-intellectual recognition but lack in practice. They are acquainted with the form of the Word of God but do not have its Spirit and life. In light of Barth's understanding of the essence of God, the *action* of God is identical with the *essence* of God. The action of God grounded in participation, revelation, prayer, and communal worship is the origin and substance of human action. Only when one actively participates in the event of the ministry, can one co-inhere in the essence of God and become an authentic and true Christian.

To be true Christians, a practical and active participation in divine action is indispensable. Thus, Barth insists that "To believe and to obey, coming to this place in practice and becoming in practice what they already are, not just in theory, but according to the resolve of God and on the basis of His act of reconciliation, namely, those who are also called, who also know, who also witness, who also have a part in the responsibility of the community."³⁹⁰ In this respect, the evangelisation of the community is the most important and momentous institution of self-actualisation to all nominal Christians. However, it is affirmed once again that its primary content is not the human action of knowing but the divine reconciling operation. Only when God constitutes the ministry and calls on the people are the nominal called to indwell in divine action, that is nothing else but His Being. Only when perichoretic union and indwelling happen between human action and divine action through the Spirit, can man and the community become ontologically true and real.

³⁸⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 873.

³⁹⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 873.

In contrast to the self-renewing evangelisation within the community itself, the fifth function of the community is the task of mission to the non-believing. In obedience to the final command of the Lord Jesus, the community has to go out to the nations and proclaim and witness the Gospel, God's spoken Word which constitutes the basic framework and being of the community. Barth explains this by pointing out briefly its particular elements. He gives several preconditions of missionary work. First, Barth claims that "Missions to the heathen, and they particularly, can be pursued meaningfully only on the presupposition of the clear promise and firm belief that everything which was needed for the salvation of all, and therefore of these men who have fallen victim to these false beliefs in false gods, has already taken place, that Jesus Christ died and rose again for these heathens too. Thus the task of mission can consist only in announcing this to them."³⁹¹ The community itself as an active free agent in foreign missions has a responsibility to bring the heathen to the glory of God and the salvation of men by making known the Gospel to them.

However, the dynamics of the missionary work should not be coercive or oppressive to the hearers. As the heathen are used to their own way of thought, culture and religions that may differ in various ways from what the Gospel projects, their responses to the Gospel may be hostile or indifferent. Barth therefore warns the community to be respectful and sincere to the heathen and their lifestyle and yet also to have an equally sincere lack of respect for false beliefs in false gods.³⁹² The community should be cautious and respectful in the manner of building personal relationships with the heathen so as not to lose its own character and mission. Thus, the ideal attitude of mission should not take an authoritative form but should rather reflect a sincere and devoted relationship in the form of humble service. When the Word of God in His reconciling action comes to the community and each individual member in a personal way, He respects their free will and wants them to receive the call and participate in the communion in freedom. In the same way, the community should approach the

³⁹¹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 874.

³⁹² Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 875.

heathen and their world in a loving personal way and wait for their responses and acceptance in freedom.

The final function of the ministry in the form of speech that Barth sets out is the ministry of theology. It is a science with which the community can integrate various parts of its ministry and diagnose its own problems. It is a ministry of appraisal of its own actions. Theology is essential to the being of the community and its ministry:

In theology the community gives a critical account, both to itself and to the world which listens with it, of the appropriateness or otherwise of its praise of God, its preaching, its instruction, its evangelistic and missionary work, but also of the activity which cannot be separated from these things, and therefore of its witness in the full and comprehensive sense and in relation to its origin, theme and content. In the ministry of theology the community tests its whole action by the standard of its commission, and finally in the light of the Word of the Lord who gave it.³⁹³

Since the time of the Old and New Testaments, the community has been trying to preserve the authenticity of Scripture as the Word of God. In this, the community has encountered many and diverse challenges from the world. In the meantime, the ministry of theology has helped the community to hold a right relationship to the original witness and to enable this body of knowledge to be normative for the practice of its ministry in every part in every era and place. Although human theological endeavour and research into divine revelation are very important in presenting and preserving the *dynamic* Word of God revealed to man, the ministry of theology would be mere human speculation or elaboration without the illumination and instruction of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the ministry of theology, human theological work and research have to be guided by the Spirit of Truth. In order for it to be a true and authentic ministry of theology, the illumination of the Holy Spirit should be complementarily related with it as an absolute condition.

4. The Ministry in the Form of Action

In the previous section, with respect to the perichoretic pattern of the relationship between divine action and human action, *speech-based* ministries

³⁹³ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 879.

were discussed as the first series of forms of ministry. However, the second series of forms of ministry Barth thinks primarily and predominantly *action-based* ministries, such as prayer and the cure of souls, the Diaconate, prophetic action and fellowship. Barth begins with prayer. His definition of prayer in this section is somewhat different from the meaning usually understood in a spiritual and individual perspective; it implies a rather broader sense of meaning. Prayer is a communal action and movement in which every member of the community jointly and continually participates. With reference to Scripture, Barth explains it in the following way:

Prayer is a basic element in the whole action of the whole community. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Hence prayer - we are reminded of the first person plural in the Lord's Prayer - is a work of the community. In and with the community all the members can and should also pray individually.³⁹⁴

He does not deny the importance of the individual aspect of prayer, but wants to put more emphasis upon prayer as a group-oriented action and ministry that is not generally recognized or practised in the community. As a group-oriented action, prayer's content, claims Barth, is "an inseparable union of both thanksgiving and intercession: the one in relation to the past for the free grace of God already received in it; the other in relation to the future for the same grace which will be needed in it."³⁹⁵ In this action of thanksgiving and intercession, the community calls on God and His active control of it by appealing to His free grace. Eventually, the prayer leads the community to enter into a covenantal relationship with God as a partner of the ministry that makes the prayer more than a gesture of elevation of the heart.³⁹⁶ This communal action of prayer, as for praise, makes the community clearly distinctive and different from any other types of social gathering or activities.

In relation to prayer, Barth brings forth the cure of souls as a sign and witness of the community for people both within and outside itself. Like the action of prayer, the cure of souls takes the form of both divine and human action.

³⁹⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, pp. 882-883.

³⁹⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 883.

³⁹⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 883.

The cure of souls in one sense signifies “a concrete actualisation of the participation of the one in the particular past, present and future of the other, in his particular burdens and afflictions, but above all in his particular promise and hope in the singularity of his existence as created and sustained by God.”³⁹⁷ This concrete actualisation of divine-human action happens when one points the other to the living and dynamic Word of God which nourishes and comforts him in both temporal and eternal life. Consequently, it helps each member of the community to indwell and integrate with the others spiritually in the Lord. Hence, the ministry of the cure of souls is not a service for man alone but for both God and man. In this ministry, God acts as the Father, Friend and Helper of man, and man in his appointed time and situation is called and ordained to be a hearer and witness of the Word.

The next important form of ministry is the institution of the diaconate, the rendering of the service. As Barth recognizes, it is not easy to define the role of the diaconate. The first reference to the institution of the diaconate can be found in the account in Acts 6 which attests that the community elects and commissions seven people to help people in need practically so that the apostles can fully devote themselves to prayer and proclamation of the Gospel. However, according to other references, such as Romans 15, Philippians 1 and 1 Timothy 3, the role of the diaconate generally implies the bearer of appointed roles and tasks in the community, but does not explain what the roles and tasks are. Throughout history this term has been used in various ways in the local churches referring to different roles.³⁹⁸

However, Barth does not want to limit this form of ministry only to a specialized work of the community for the poor and the distressed but rather to include the whole spectrum of its action including the witness of the Word of God. In nature, it is also characterized as a service for both God and man. In the first sense, it is a service for man. As the initial reference of the term diaconate in the Bible testifies, the task of the diaconate is characterized by serving people who

³⁹⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 885.

³⁹⁸ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 890.

are practically in need, such as caring for the sick, the poor, and the distressed who need physical and material help both within and outside the community. Unlike other more visible roles of the community, such as recognized evangelist, preacher, learned theologian, or a talented leader of worship, which can easily lose their character as service, the service of the diaconate is not favoured by the members but shows servanthship by assuming marginalized and hidden works of the community.

A further material aspect Barth brings forth is that those in the diaconate, who assume and carry out the un-favoured and often concealed works for the poor and the marginalized within and out with the community, indirectly reveal and witness “the universal nature of the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ, of the kingdom and of the love of God.”³⁹⁹ Moreover, as he continues, “Its distinctive action is to hold out a helping hand, indicatively and in part at least causing the good deed which corresponds to the good Word to be tasted and felt, and thus enabling the good Word to be understood in the fullness of its truth.”⁴⁰⁰ Thus, in the light of Barth’s explication, the diaconate is also in a broad sense, a service for God. The service of the diaconate through good deeds makes the Word of God known and understood to people more accessibly and concretely. In this sense, this ministry definitely and practically obeys and executes the direction and service given by the Lord of the community. Hence, this ministry is an indispensable institution of the community.

Another distinctive feature that characterizes the ministry of the community is prophetic action. Its action is directly related to understanding the present affairs and relationships of its own historical events with respect to the coming kingdom of God attested by the community. Unlike the general understanding of prophecy, the prophetic action Barth explains here does not imply something like an abrupt and whimsical announcement of eschatological events. Rather, it means that in faith the community believes in the Word of God and proclaims its prophetic message to the world so that it gives insight into the

³⁹⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 890.

⁴⁰⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 892.

concrete meaning of the present events occurring in the world in relation to the revealed truth. Barth claims:

[T]he community looks and grasps and moves in and from its present into the future, not arbitrarily nor on the basis of analyses, prognostications and projects, but in attention to the voice of its Lord who is also the Lord of the world, who repeats what He said when He called, established and commissioned it in what now takes place within it and the world as spheres of His lordship, who thus points and leads it to the future, and lays on its lips in a new form, though with no material change, the witness entrusted to it.⁴⁰¹

By listening to the prophetic voice of the Shepherd who is the Creator of the world and true administrator and controller of its affairs, the community attests and repeats what He said to it. This prophetic office which is a divinely-commissioned responsibility of attesting the Word, entrusted to the community, is not ecstatic or incidental in nature; rather, it offers “the sober disclosure of the sublime and exciting truth.”⁴⁰² Thus, the prophetic institution properly guides the world to recognize the Word of God and know its immanent manifestations. This mission is not limited to a certain group of people in the community. Rather, the whole community is appointed and summoned to execute this prophetic office.

As a final form of action of the ministry of action, Barth brings forth the upbuilding of fellowship. The first and most important task of the community is to reveal and attest God’s particular fellowship with the community and general fellowship with His created world, which are based on the dynamics of the trinitarian communion between the Father, the Son and the Spirit.⁴⁰³ In these fellowships, the one kingdom of God and one covenant of reconciliation are to be made known. Consequently, both the community and the world are called together to one service of free thanksgiving for the grace of God that essentially gathers and unites all together under His sovereign lordship. This divinely-proffered fellowship unites men to one another and must be revealed in all the forms and functions of the Church’s ministry in nature.

⁴⁰¹ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 895.

⁴⁰² Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 897.

⁴⁰³ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 898.

The fellowship-oriented community in the Holy Spirit is appointed to go into the world, attest the one reconciling grace of God and call men to the one service of thanksgiving. In so doing, the community does not merely meet people but unite with them in mutual fellowship. In the midst of separation, conflict and disorder, the community has a responsibility to bring forth a new and true and fruitful and loving union among men by the power of the Holy Spirit, the invisible divine action that is “the prototype, the meaning and the power of the visible and signficatory action of the community and therefore of the unification of men therein attested.”⁴⁰⁴

As discussed in the previous part of the chapter, the twofold determination of the Church is the inseparable yet distinguishable union between the divine action of redemption and the human action in response to His call. The ministry of upbuilding of fellowship, as a nexus to the reconciling work and solidarity with God, comes only from a particular awakening power of God, the Holy Spirit. In this respect, Barth claims that:

[I]t must be on the basis of a particular address and gift, in virtue of a particular awakening power of God, by which he is born again to this will and ability, to the freedom of this action, and under the lordship and impulse of which he is another man, in defiance of his being and status as a sinner. God in this particular address and gift, God in this awakening power, God as the Creator of this other man, is the *Holy Spirit*.⁴⁰⁵

Thus, only when the Holy Spirit is in action as an awakening power of God with His own message and particular gift for the Christian community, can man recognize his fallen status and know what he has to look for, reconciliation with God by the mediating work of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as Barth defines, is “God coming to man, and coming to him in such a way that He is revealed to him as the God who reconciles the world and man to Himself, in such a way therefore that what He is and does for him as such becomes the Word which man can hear and actually does hear, in such a way, therefore, that man allows himself to be reconciled with Him (2 Cor. 5:20).”⁴⁰⁶ The Holy Spirit is the

⁴⁰⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/3.2, p. 901.

⁴⁰⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 645. (Italics mine)

⁴⁰⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 646.

only source of and driving force behind true fellowship between God and man. He first comes to man then initiates and inaugurates peace-making action by way of enlightening man; He reveals the Word of God and encourages man to know and hear Him and to participate in the divinely-proffered action of redemption.

However, for Barth man is not a “*marionette*” or unconscious instrument solely controlled by the divine with regard to the action of redemption.⁴⁰⁷ Barth gives special emphasis to the indispensability of free and independent moral action of human beings in relation to the divine action of redemption. On the other hand, human will and action are not self-sufficient but absolutely dependent upon the awakening power of the Spirit of God. The dynamics of the bipolar relationality in tension and the complementary union invigorate the Church and fulfil the true communion between God and man. “From all this it is self-evident that neither the Christian community nor the individual Christian can subjugate or possess or control Him, directing and overruling His work. He makes man free, but He himself, the Spirit of the Lord, remains free in relation to him. He awakens man to faith, but it is still necessary to believe in Him.”⁴⁰⁸ Hence, human will or action cannot manipulate the Holy Spirit who has the absolute power in the dynamic event of reconciliation, yet man’s participation in it through faith as a free, independent agent is absolutely required for concrete and active moral action. Since He respects man as an authentic *person* in communion, God expects man to exercise his own free will as a true person in the imparted relational ground - as each divine Person recognizes and respects one another’s unique and free will in communion. In this respect, the complementary union between the divine action of redemption and the active moral participation of man creates a dynamic and ongoing movement in a historico-teleological community toward the *ἔσχατον*.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Barth, C.L., pp. 102-103.

⁴⁰⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 646.

Chapter V

Karl Barth's Theology of Baptism: The Complementary Relation between Divine Grace and Human Faith in Baptism

Introduction

In this chapter, I will delve into Barth's doctrine of baptism with respect to his unique understanding of the complementary relation between divine action and human action as following the pattern of the perichoretic inner divine communion. In relation to the previous chapter on Barth's analogical use of the perichoretic union of the triune God in the ecclesiastical context, this chapter will be another detailed work that presents an indirect correspondence and similarity between the perichoretic *intra* divine communion and the complementary divine-human communion in Barth's theology of ethics in the Church. I will investigate and appraise how Barth understands and applies the dynamic pattern of the περιχώρησις between divine action of grace and human action of response in the doctrine of baptism. I will measure the importance of moral action in baptism in comparison to that of divine command and grace. With regard to this issue, a sound and unbiased exposition of the relation between divine grace and human action shall be laid down and examined.

In the light of the ecumenical theology that gives comprehensive consideration to Lutheran and Calvinist traditions of baptism as well as that of Roman Catholicism, George Hunsinger criticizes Karl Barth's famous comments on the traditional teaching of the doctrine of baptism that baptism is not a *sacrament*, mystery, or revelation of salvation, but that Jesus Christ is the only true sacrament.⁴⁰⁹ Reckoning that Barth's view of baptism has brought about more troublesome dispute than solution, Hunsinger objects to Barth's view of baptism, arguing that Barth's theology of baptism seems strangely inconsistent with his usual logic in other places. For instance, with respect to Barth's understanding of the Word of God in threefold form in relation to the threefold

⁴⁰⁹ George Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth (Cambridge: Eerdmanns, 2000), p. 275. Also see Barth, C.L., pp. 45, 46.

sacrament in his Church Dogmatics I/1, Hunsinger contends that “For although Jesus Christ is also the one Word of God, that does not prevent Barth from presenting Holy Scripture and biblical preaching as secondary forms of God’s Word....I can see no reason why he could not have coordinated baptism and the Lord’s Supper with preaching, and the idea of the church as sacrament with Scripture as the written Word.”⁴¹⁰ Furthermore, Hunsinger claims in the light of his definition of the Barthian logic of the *koinōnia* relation,⁴¹¹ “‘Sign’ and ‘reality’ would thus be seen as related by complete mutual coinherence, so that the sign was in the reality even as the reality was also in the sign, without separation and division, without confusion or change, and with the reality taking precedence over the sign.”⁴¹²

However, when we analyse Barth’s understanding of the threefold form of the Word of God in his Dogmatics, we see that Hunsinger decisively fails to grasp Barth’s definition of the Word of God as sacrament and his use of the principles of analogy in this context. Barth clearly talks about proclamation, the Bible, and revelation as the three different *forms* of the Word of God;⁴¹³ that proclamation and the Bible *indirectly* reveal the revelation, “the direct Word of God,” with respect to the analogical use of “the doctrine of the Triunity of God.”⁴¹⁴ At this point, we have to keep in mind the fact that, according to Barth, the divine Word cannot be *capitalised* but is an ongoing event that shows “the actuality of revelation and faith.”⁴¹⁵ Barth identifies proclamation and the Bible with the revelation, the Word of God, *not* directly but *derivatively and indirectly*.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁰ Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, p. 275.

⁴¹¹ Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, p. 271. In this page, Hunsinger defines the “the *koinōnia* relation” in the following manner: “The relationship between the Christ who dies in our place and those who receive him by faith is a *koinōnia* relation. It is a relationship of mutual indwelling, of unity-in-distinction and distinction-in-unity. Christ and believers are related by a pattern of mutual coinherence such that each of them is somehow contained by the other in an inseparable bond of unity. Each is contained by the other precisely as a whole, for believers are completely baptized into Christ’s death even as Christ now lives completely in them as the one who died for them... Nevertheless, each of them retains his own particular and irreducible identity, even as each of them exists in and for the other as an indivisible whole.”

⁴¹² Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, p. 276.

⁴¹³ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 120.

⁴¹⁴ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 121.

⁴¹⁵ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 89. Barth, Against Stream, p. 207.

⁴¹⁶ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 117.

Moreover, he clearly states that revelation as one of the three different forms of the Word of God underlies the other two forms, proclamation and the Bible, and that revelation as the direct word of God is indirectly revealed from proclamation and the Bible.⁴¹⁷ In other words, revelation as the direct Word of God and divine grace make the twofold mediacy, proclamation and the Bible, the indirect forms of the Word of God that Barth considers “the actuality of revelation and faith.”⁴¹⁸ For this reason, proclamation cannot be proclamation, or the Bible cannot be the Bible, without divine revelation as the direct Word of God that has to be heard in faith.⁴¹⁹

In dealing with theological language, we have already studied Barth’s analogy in the first chapter along with the relation between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei* whose main subject matter is not a parity or disparity between the divine Word and human language in talk about God, but a relationship of similarity and correspondence between the Creator and the creature overcoming mutual exclusion in that relationship which is nothing but analogy as a partial but genuine correspondence between God and man.⁴²⁰ With respect to Barth’s logic of analogy, Hunsinger’s criticism of Barth’s doctrine of the Word of God is misleading because, in contrast to Barth’s idea, Hunsinger *directly* identifies the Word of God with proclamation and the Bible on the basis of his own definition of the *koinōnia* relation. That is the reason Hunsinger claims that “‘sign’ and ‘reality’ would thus be seen as related by complete mutual coinherence, so that the sign was in the reality even as the reality was also in the sign, without separation and division, without confusion or change, and with the reality taking precedence over the sign.”⁴²¹ And he continues, “While the bread would remain bread, for example, it would properly be designated ‘the body of Christ’ by virtue of its ‘sacramental union’ (a term accepted by both Luther and Calvin in this context) or ‘mutual indwelling’ with the body of the risen Christ.”⁴²²

⁴¹⁷ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 121.

⁴¹⁸ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 89.

⁴¹⁹ Barth, C.D. I/1, pp. 47, 88.

⁴²⁰ Barth, C.D. II/1, p. 225.

⁴²¹ Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, p. 276.

⁴²² Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, p. 276.

Unfortunately, Hunsinger is on the wrong track in his interpretation of the so-called Barthian logic. The Barthian logic Hunsinger refers to does not really fit with Barth's use of analogy and theology of ethics as described in the previous chapters. For instance, in his early writing, The Epistle to the Romans 1922, Barth clearly says, "[B]y identifying truth with some concrete thing, we deprive a sign of its truth."⁴²³ The Word of God cannot be materialised. The Bible alone as a written form cannot be the Word of God or represent the Word of God because in the light of Barth's own complementary dialectic and the *analogia fidei*, the truth is not an objective fact but *subjective inwardness*. The Bible, for instance, in the light of Barth's logic, cannot be directly identified with the Word of God because one must read the Bible and encounter revelation, the Word of God, with personal and subjective faith! Proclamation and the Bible are *indirect* forms of the Word of God where revelation as the *direct* divine Word and its content unites with the human response of faith. In a way, proclamation and the Bible as *indirect* forms of the Word of God pointing to the Word of God are comparable to the index finger of John the Baptist pointing to Jesus on the cross in Matthias Grünewald's painting of the Crucifixion. However, we should not just look at the prodigious index finger of John the Baptist unless we miss the crucified Christ. We should look at Jesus Christ to whom the finger points!

Moreover, in order to reconcile different views of baptism from the perspective of the ecumenical theology, Hunsinger advocates that baptism should be considered as a sacrament, seal of the Word of God and a means of salvation, in contrast to Barth's rejection of this idea that emerged in the second century.⁴²⁴ Barth faithfully follows the Heidelberg Catechism with regard to the definition of sacrament.⁴²⁵ With respect to the Catechism, Barth rejects the idea of baptism as

⁴²³ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 192.

⁴²⁴ Barth, C.L., p. 46. Barth, in the same text, describes the erroneous church tradition of baptism in the following manner: "Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not events, institutions, or revelations of salvation. They are not representations and actualizations, emanations, repetitions, or extensions, nor indeed guarantees and seals of the work and word of God; nor are they instruments, vehicles, channels, or means of God's reconciling grace. They are not what they have been called since the second century, namely, mysteries or sacraments."

⁴²⁵ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 56. In the Heidelberg Catechism, 1563, qu. 66: "What are the sacraments?—They are visible, sacred signs and seals appointed by God, so that through the use of the same He may the better give us to understand the promise of the Gospel, and seal the same,

mystery or a sacrament, “attributing to the sign itself a direct mystical and magical communication or more rationally, by treating the sign as a concrete ‘symbol’ of the Christian ‘myth’.”⁴²⁶ Instead of considering baptism as revelation of “salvation” or seal of “the work and Word of God,” Barth treats baptism as “a rite of initiation” into the Church and action of “human obedience.”⁴²⁷ And in his later writing, Barth also reconfirms his earlier view by claiming, “[B]aptism relates especially...to man’s entry into a life determined by calling upon God.”⁴²⁸

Further to Barth’s theology of baptism, Robert W. Jenson, as a well-known Lutheran theologian, also claims that baptism should not be considered as “the means by which the church opens salvation to individuals or by which individuals testify salvation otherwise gained.”⁴²⁹ Rather, in the light of Thomas Aquinas’ remark, as well as other, biblical, evidence, Jenson insists that baptism should be considered as “an initiation into the Church.”⁴³⁰ Moreover, Hans Küng, as a respected Catholic theologian, supports Karl Barth’s rejection of baptism as sacrament. Küng claims, “Paul warns us that baptism has no magic effect and cannot of itself guarantee salvation.”⁴³¹ Rather, he continues, baptism is “a rite of initiation into the community” that requires man’s “free decision in faith.”⁴³² He claims that “[B]aptism by itself is of no value. Baptism and *metanoia*, baptism and faith go together.”⁴³³ The Word of God by means of proclamation and the Bible brings about faith but baptism does not. Baptism as the human response to divine command and the visual sign and testimony of faith is a “consequence of

namely, that for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross He graciously grants us remission of sins and eternal life.”

⁴²⁶ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 192.

⁴²⁷ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans 1922, p. 192; Barth, C.L., pp. 46, 47.

⁴²⁸ Barth, C.L., p. 45.

⁴²⁹ Robert W. Jenson, “The Church and the Sacraments,” in Christian Doctrine, ed. by Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 219.

⁴³⁰ Jenson, “The Church and the Sacraments,” pp. 220, 221.

⁴³¹ Hans Küng, The Church, trans. by Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden (Kent: Burns & Oates, 1995), p. 208.

⁴³² Küng, The Church, pp. 208, 209.

⁴³³ Küng, The Church, p. 207.

faith”,⁴³⁴ not the other way around. Thus, Küng claims, “[B]aptism comes from faith, and faith leads to baptism.”⁴³⁵

It is obvious at this point that in contrast to Hunsinger’s criticism, Barth has a good reason for not linking baptism with preaching, and the idea of the church as a sacrament with Scripture as the written Word. As Paul testifies in Romans 10:17, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ”; the Word of God is heard by means of proclamation and the Bible that brings about faith. In contrast, the fact that baptism does not bring about faith in man makes a big difference between the *sacramental* threefold form of the Word of God and baptism as a non-*sacramental* rite of initiation. We will now delve into how Barth develops his theology of baptism in the light of the *analogia fidei* and the relation between divine action and human action in the ecclesiastical context. In the order of Barth’s own discussion of the three different kinds of baptism, I will first deal with Barth’s exposition on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then the baptism of water. In the final section, I will set out how Barth construes the doctrine of infant baptism along with rather brief biblical and patristic evidence and some works of the leaders of the Reformation, Luther and Calvin.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The divine change, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that occurs when one converts to Christianity, is different from any other kinds of change, whether natural or super-natural. It is not an ordinary moral happening but a divinely-wrought event of which Jesus Christ is the sole ground and root. Anything that is not joined to the root cannot initiate and perpetuate its own life. Christianity without Jesus Christ is unthinkable and vain. According to Barth, “Man’s own life as the Christian life is possible and actual only in unity with its origin in Jesus Christ.”⁴³⁶ The baptism of the Holy Spirit means union with the Lord Jesus and the foundation of the Christian life. Barth here attributes the origin and the

⁴³⁴ Küng, *The Church*, p. 208.

⁴³⁵ Küng, *The Church*, p. 207.

⁴³⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 17.

principle of the regeneration of people to God and His action. Messiah Jesus is the origin of the new beginning of the Christian life in history. We cannot think of ourselves or our existence apart from Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, the new Christian life generated by the event of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is controlled and perpetuated not only by divine action but also moral action. Jesus is truly the principle of regeneration of Christians and their community. However, human action is indispensable to its life as a self-determining corresponding action. On the basis of the newly generated Christian life in Jesus, one receives liberation and freedom from sins and ontological confinement. It becomes the ground on which man can exercise self-determining decision and action. God wants and expects man's own action in response to His grace and love. The new Christian life consists of both divine action and subjective moral action:

The faithfulness to God to which he is summoned is not, then, an emanation of God's faithfulness. It is truly his own faithfulness, decision and act. He could not achieve it if he were not liberated thereto. But, being thus liberated, he does it as his own act, as his answer to the word of God spoken to him in the history of Jesus Christ.⁴³⁷

Liberation here means freedom given to human beings with which they can participate in the mode of divine Being with authentic ontological content. Barth brings forth the dynamic relationship between divine action and human action with regard to the divine change. However, before delving further into the issue, Barth wishes to give special insight into the value of moral action in relation to the validity of the divine change. Clearly Barth here recognizes the freedom of human beings before God and presupposes the absence of any kind of coercive and unidirectional power structure. Instead, he describes a new kind of relationship between God and man within a framework of divinely given liberation through which one becomes an authentic human being.

In order to reach the liberating ground of the new Christian life in which one can exist as a free person, one must initially have a covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ. Barth develops his position in the following manner:

⁴³⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 23.

To be a man means (not incidentally but essentially, not peripherally but centrally) to be once in time (one's own time) the addressee and recipient of the pledge and promise which is given one too—not just proffered but given—in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in this sense to be a participant in the history of Jesus Christ which took place once, then and there in time.⁴³⁸

To be an authentic man, one must have a relationship with Jesus Christ by listening and receiving His saving word through which He presents Himself and His work to every man. In accepting the Word of God, one participates in the liberating ground of the new life and recovers the image of God as a real person unchained from the bondage of ontological limit and necessity. Thus, the newly generated life given to a Christian in the salvific work of Messiah Jesus in history becomes the foreground of the communion and the dynamic relation between God and human being.

People are called to join in life-giving communion in Him. Here, Barth wants to point out that the human response to the divine calling is voluntary out of his or her own faithfulness to His saving Word. However, this self-determining correspondence is not something one can do by one's own capability and freedom but only in a freedom which is given to him or her. Barth claims, "The divine change and act in virtue of which this happens—seen now from the standpoint of the freedom, ability, willingness and readiness of man—is the work of the Holy Spirit."⁴³⁹ Barth here attributes the concrete salvific event in history to the work of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit which awakens human souls and convinces them to know God in Jesus Christ. Freedom is here a kind of prepositional framework, in which a perichoretic relational unity occurs between divine action and human action.

Barth sets out five essential features of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that are related to the content of divine action which is nothing but constitutive of the

⁴³⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 26. This idea reflects the tradition of the Eastern Church, and it is similar to what John Zizioulas mentions in his book, *Being as Communion*. Zizioulas, as a representative and epoch-making Greek Orthodox theologian in our age, develops this issue more systematically and concretely. To be a man is to participate actively in a relationship. By way of participating in a communal relationship, one is recognized as a person which is an authentic human *being*.

⁴³⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 27.

Christian life. First, as was mentioned briefly above, the dynamic Word of God which directly manifests the living Lord Jesus and His saving work is essential to the beginning of Christian life.⁴⁴⁰ Jesus Christ is the foundational ground and initiator of the beginning. He is the centre around which all Christian life and moral action revolve. In witnessing the Word of God, the community of Jesus Christ plays an important role by providing a basis of participation in its ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. Barth claims:

Its work and action in all forms, even in the best possibilities, stands and falls with the self-attestation and self-impartation of Jesus Christ Himself, in which it can only participate as assistant and minister. Hence, though the Word of Jesus Christ unquestionably calls a man to the Church, in the Church it immediately and directly calls him to Himself as the Lord of the Church, as the Head of this body of His, as the one Good Shepherd. This Word of Jesus Christ which goes forth directly to a man and calls him directly to Jesus Christ Himself, and which all human words from church dogma, indeed, even from the words of the apostles and evangelists down to the most modest *mutua consolatio fratrum* can only accompany, expound and illuminate is the divine change in a man's life, his baptism with the Holy Spirit, the beginning of his Christian life.⁴⁴¹

The Christian community is the locus where man is called to worship God and is connected to Him by an intimate relationship with Him. Nevertheless, when one becomes a Christian, and as such a member of the holy people of the covenant through the ministry of the community, neither man nor the witnessing work of the community is the source of the regenerated Christian life. The Christian life begins when the witnessing ministry of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, happens to human souls. Jesus Christ Himself, and He alone, is the source of the Christian life. He Himself becomes the divine change in the life of man through the work of the Holy Spirit by establishing a nexus between God and man.

The second distinctive feature of the divine change, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is the active and fulfilling grace of God. This change, founding a new existence, is the fullness of the saving events brought about in Jesus the Lord.

⁴⁴⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 31.

⁴⁴¹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 32.

Consequently, this happening is “effective, causative, even creative action on man and in man.”⁴⁴² This divinely constituted change results in a total renewal and true cleansing of man. As it is divinely initiated and conducted, “Whatever may be his attitude to it, whatever he himself may make of it, it is (we recall the New Testament descriptions) his being clothed on with a new garment which is Jesus Christ Himself, his endowment with a new heart controlled by Jesus Christ, his new generation and birth in brotherhood with Jesus Christ, his saving death in the presence of the death which Jesus Christ suffered for him.”⁴⁴³ Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, one receives the righteousness of the Lord regardless of one’s depravity and sinfulness. This divine change generates hope for new relation and personhood with God in his life when he is baptised with the Holy Spirit. This significant modification in himself imparts to him “freedom for a specific human decision in conformity with the liberation.”⁴⁴⁴

Divinely given freedom is indispensable to the relationship with God and to the new way of being. This freedom changes the entire nature of the relationship between God and man. Even though the freedom is divinely and freely bestowed on a man in the event of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not achieved by moral action and endeavour, it becomes a crucial condition of brotherhood with Jesus Christ. In other words, it is a prerequisite to participation in the divine personhood, the absolute mode of being through which human nature can subsist in the divine hypostasis. Freedom as the direct product of divine change is nothing but a gracious gift of God for depraved, bounded human nature. Hence, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a divinely effective, causative and creative renewal on man and in man.

The second feature of the divine change, the grace bestowed on the human being, is God’s grace in its fullness, that deserves and demands full and heartfelt gratitude from man. Barth, thus, points out the demand for unconditional gratitude as the third aspect of the divine change. The fully effective, causative and creative grace of God is given to man at the event of the baptism of the Holy

⁴⁴² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 34.

⁴⁴³ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 34.

⁴⁴⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 34.

Spirit. What then is the nature of God's demand? What should be the right attitude of man toward the demand? Barth here brings forth the problems of ethics:

The problem of the second section now comes directly into view—that of the decision in taking which man is liberated, yet also called, by the divine change which comes upon him. He has to take up a position in relation to this, the only position which can be taken, but a position taken in freedom. It is not that God's act on and in man makes of him a cog set in motion thereby. The free God does not act thus with man.⁴⁴⁵

As an answer to His calling in the midst of the divine change, man has to take a concrete action which, though, is not in the nature of an imperative demand but given to him in absolute self-willing freedom. Through the effective and creative divine change, man is enabled to exercise the given freedom and determine himself independently from divine action. Here he is qualified to exercise the freedom of his own accord. Moreover, man is invited and encouraged to practise it. It might be more appropriate to construe the meaning of man's freedom with respect to the nature of the divine change, because gratitude as a free human action responding to divine calling opens up a new and higher dimension and mode of existence for man. In the position granted to him through the grace of God and taken in freedom, a man fulfils the divine command. The man spiritually regenerated in the baptism of the Holy Spirit naturally and properly behaves in accordance with the will of the Spirit, as each tree yields its own fruits in nature. This is not an involuntary, unconscious response of a man. Barth puts special emphasis on the nature of the non-mechanical operation of human action in freedom.⁴⁴⁶ If it were intrinsically mechanical, freedom would lose its true meaning and function and ruin the entire fabric of the divine change at the same time. It can therefore only be his free decision, and of his own accord, according to the Spirit by whom he is baptised.

The fourth element is that a man regenerated by the divine change finds himself in the community of the Lord Jesus. In the event of the baptism of the

⁴⁴⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 35.

⁴⁴⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 36.

Holy Spirit, he receives freedom with which he participates in the new Christian mode of existence. At the same time, he is able to perpetuate a new mode of being that consists of a network of relations not only to God but also to fellow Christians.

Because it is baptism with the Holy Spirit, it is identical with his reception into the Church as the assembly of those who, according to the Vulgate rendering of Mk 3:34, *in circuitu eius sedebant*, who, continuing in a circle around Jesus, are engaged in doing the will of God as His people.⁴⁴⁷

The divine change adopts him to the community of the Lord Jesus who is its Head. In this community, he shares with, serves and is served by other spiritually regenerated people. Eventually, he can identify himself with them. He becomes one with the community, the body of Jesus. “He can be the free man he is when born anew, from above, as he belongs to them. He is one in this people of God, a member of the body whose head is Jesus Christ. He is in the community.”⁴⁴⁸ The event of the divine change invites the people of God to gather together freely and revolve around Jesus who is the foundation of their existence as an assembly of God.

Once accepted into the community of Jesus Christ, he takes part in the body. Every one of the members of the community has his own unique spiritual power given in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “When He is poured forth, when men are baptized with Him, He exists in the fullness of the *charismata* of the one community.”⁴⁴⁹ From the beginning of the divine change, the Holy Spirit is immanent in the regenerated people of God with full strength and power. Literally, man receives and is integrated with the Spirit of God in the divine change. The Spirit indwells and works in him. Various gifts of the Spirit are distributed to each man according to his own needs and concern for the fullness of the community. Each man can thus live and perform his own part and task with his own spiritual power for the full manifestation of the community, the body of Jesus Christ. As a vital functioning organ of the body of the Lord, he fulfils the

⁴⁴⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 37.

⁴⁴⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 37.

⁴⁴⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 38.

divinely commissioned service of the community in the ideal power structure. Barth insists, "The hierarchy of these endowments and equipment, their super- and subordination the one to the other, can never be rigid. Always and everywhere it is fluid, and necessarily remains so."⁴⁵⁰ As the community is constituted under the condition of freedom, no involuntary and coercive action or command can exist in it. The power structure of the community directly reflects the dynamics of the relationality and the nature of the hierarchy of the triune Godhead, living and loving in absolute freedom. The relation between all those in the community is none other than the communion of saints. When the people of God come together around the Lord Jesus, they serve each other by participating and indwelling mutually in loving communal relations.

Finally, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the inception of the Christian life. This divine change is a beginning pointing forward to the future. In other words, it is a movement toward the eschatological consummation in Christ that reiterates the dialectic statement, "already but not yet." It also implies the teleological end of history. As Barth argues, "It is not perfect. It is not self-sufficient, definitive, or complete. It is a commencement which points forward to the future. It is a take off for the leap towards what is not yet present. It is a start which involves looking to and stretching for a future."⁴⁵¹ Even after the baptism of the Holy Spirit, man still faces various predicaments in his daily life. In the present reality, man may experience success and failure, joy and sorrow. Sometimes, it seems nothing has changed at all and occasionally things even seem worse. However, the Bible reveals that for those baptised with the Holy Spirit, the old has passed away and the new is already coming. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of one's spiritual journey toward the Promised Land. It is not itself the end of one's pilgrimage to the kingdom of God. It is only a departure in the right direction, toward the revealed future. It offers an eschatological orientation.

It also implies the concept of growth in the light of the New Testament. This growth is different from the concept of organic augmentation of an object. It

⁴⁵⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 38.

⁴⁵¹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 38.

entails the constant creation and renewal of an object. Barth here claims, “In all its actions, the work of the Holy Spirit is always and everywhere a wholly new thing. At each moment of its occurrence, it is itself another change, a conversion, which calls for even more radical conversion.”⁴⁵² This implies that a regenerated person lives and discovers at every second his new being in the creative and effective work of the divine action and grace. As it is a teleological movement in time and space, it constantly and actively renews man until the realization of the eschatological existence of man. The new Christian life is never static but it is itself a process of creative renewal toward a goal in the future. The teleological and eschatological nature of the Christian life in the Holy Spirit reveals that man’s true ontology lies in the present as well as the future.

Baptism with Water

1. The Meaning of Water Baptism

Barth introduces several major purposes of water baptism. First, when man is baptised with water, he participates in the service of the community. Service is the indispensable characteristic of the very mode of existence of the community, the body of the Lord Jesus. This service gives special meaning to the individual as well as to the community itself. It is not slavery in bondage. It is not a task he has to carry out against his will. This service is a new mode of being in the regenerated life in the community of the Lord. It is a sheer expression of his new being, his new hypostasis in the community. It becomes a sign that confirms his true status and new being in the community of fellow Christians. The service becomes none other than a way of sharing fellowship with the members of the body of Jesus and its Head, Jesus the Son. In baptism, he humbly and willingly joins in the community of faith with public confession and recognition of his faith and commitment to mutual fellowship with the Lord as Mediator of the covenant and his fellow Christians. As Barth explains:

The inner contradiction in this concept is most plainly seen when one realises that service is the characteristic feature of the Christian life, that entry into service is the essence of the human decision which follows the

⁴⁵² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 38.

divine change, and when one then tried to conceive of this entry into service as an entry into the divine change, or of the human action as action in the place and role of the Lord, whereas service can surely consist only in orientating and adapting one's human action to that of God, of the Lord.⁴⁵³

By virtue of the exclusive divine change, he joins in the body of Jesus Christ at his own decision with the thoughtful preparation and consideration of the community of faith. The most important purpose of the service in which he entered into the baptism of water is to know God. The entire fabric of the service is geared toward it, and it occurs through unceasing communication and fellowship with Jesus in concrete, free moral action. Man participates in His body in which he constantly actualises his eschatological existence which has come upon him already but not yet fully. Thus, the baptism of water offers him a nexus through which he obtains and perpetuates a firm relationship and connexion with the source of his being, the Lord Jesus.

All of these are possible only when subjective divine action and subjective human action are fully integrated in man's own faith and that of the community. As Barth insists, "It is the confession of their faith. Without the faith of the Christian community and of those who join it there would be no Christian baptism. More accurately, it is the confession of the obedience of their faith, the active confession which consists as such in a washing of the candidates with water."⁴⁵⁴ In faith, the candidate requests the baptism of water. In faith, the community of the Lord prepares and offers it to him. The faith of the candidate makes his moral action relevant to the Lord Jesus. It validates the entire process of baptism and integrates it with His body.

In its nature, baptism consists of public, open declaration of man's own faith. The content of his faith is nothing but the confession of the divine act of grace upon him. It becomes his voluntary self-determined action. The declaration of the grace of God is the very beginning of the new Christian life. The act of confession of divine grace does not cease after baptism but is a teleological and eschatological act of the faithful that continues throughout the Christian life.

⁴⁵³ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 72.

⁴⁵⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 73.

In the administration of baptism they look and move forward to its demonstration in their lives. What is in view is the “washing” of the candidates which takes place in the divine act of grace and revelation and in this alone, and which, believed and recognized as such, seeks to become an event in their own lives. Neither the faith of the community and candidates nor their washing with water can anticipate or accomplish this event. The *common act of confession* can only refer to this event. Like all Christian confession, it can only bear witness to it as God’s work.⁴⁵⁵

From the inception of the baptism, its candidate realises and begins to fulfil his *raison d’être*, witnessing the grace of divine action which is the foundation and sole content of his new life. It is the divinely commissioned life-long duty of the faithful. However, the duty is willingly and gratefully taken and performed as a devotional response of the faithful. As public confession of the faith of the candidate as well as of the community, the baptism becomes a moral event giving a grateful praise, revering honour and shining glory to God. As Barth insists, the cleaning ceremony with water itself does not give any meaning to either the candidate or the community unless it witnesses the grace of divine action which is the driving force of moral action and the life of the community of the regenerated.

As an individual moral action, the water baptism is a concrete manifestation of personal faith turning away from the sinful, depraved nature of being and to a regenerated life.⁴⁵⁶ Fellow Christians become witnesses of the baptised by standing alongside him. By a candidate’s request, the community baptises him with water; nevertheless, the baptism builds an exclusive personal relation between God and himself. It is a personal response to a divine calling to become part of His body. The community only helps and assists him to be part of it by standing beside him. Personal decision in divinely given freedom makes his moral action acceptable to God. Only through personal action in freedom can he participate in the community of the regenerated.

It is public declaration on the part of the baptized that they stand in a *personal relation* to the Lord of the Christian community as the only

⁴⁵⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 74. (Italics mine)

⁴⁵⁶ Jenson, “The Church and the Sacraments,” p. 220. In this text, Jenson also advocates Barth’s point in the following manner: “The Lukan baptismal *kerygma* is precise: as baptism is a washing of repentance, it is “for the forgiveness of sins”; as it is an initiation into the life of the church, it bestows ‘the gift of the holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:38).”

source and cause of all salvation. Baptism is now their public acknowledgment of and commitment to this personal relation to Him, in short, their baptism in His name.⁴⁵⁷

Baptism is not collective in nature, but personal. It is a personal confession of faith to the Lord in the community. No one can have faith vicariously for another, in personal relationship with the Lord. Each individual's faith expressed in baptism constitutes a personal relation to the Lord of the community. People are not saved collectively but personally. Each individual receives his own salvation personally from the Lord and participates in its ground, the community of the Lord. Even if a man lives in the community of faith, he has no relation at all with the Lord unless he has personal connection with Him in faith. Faith in the Lord is indispensable to the administration of the baptism of water. Personal faith opens up the relationship with the Lord. Barth argues,

Christian baptism is the first form of the human answer to the divine change which was brought about in Him who was and is and is to come, "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). It is the first concrete step of the human decision of faith and obedience corresponding thereto in so far as it is resolutely and exclusively movement to Him, and thus the true baptism of conversion.⁴⁵⁸

The baptism of the Spirit is a divine invitation to human beings to His communion. On the other hand, the faith of man is a response following the divine initiation. His personal faith is recognizable and recognized by the community in the baptism which confirms his status as an authentic member of the body of the Lord. It is a communal reconfirmation of an adoption of the Lord in His Spirit.

2. A Complementary Relation between Divine Calling and Human Response

In the light of Barth's exposition so far, it is certain that water baptism takes place as an individual act of free obedience of man to a divine word and command. It is indeed an act of witnessing the foundation of his salvation and his

⁴⁵⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 83. (Italics mine)

⁴⁵⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 90.

new mode of being. Initiated by the divine change, water baptism brings about a new personal relation to the Lord and His body. However, the true meaning of the baptism of water is not confined to praising God for His salvation and grace toward human beings. For Barth, in the baptism of water, moral action is no less important than divine action. Barth explains the bipolar relation between water baptism as human action and the baptism of the Holy Spirit as divine action in the following manner:

Baptism relates to the one divine work which took place in Jesus Christ, to the one divine word which was spoken in Him. It is not itself, however, a divine work and word. It is the work and word of men who have become obedient to Jesus Christ and who have put their hope in Him. Baptism, as water baptism, takes place in the light of the baptism of the Spirit, and with a view to it. As such, however, it is not itself the baptism of the Spirit; it is always water baptism.⁴⁵⁹

Divine action reveals the Word and divine command to man. In obedience to the Word, man performs the baptism of water. The initial divine movement toward man and following acceptance of man should be recognized as in clear distinction from each other and integrated in perfect harmony. For this reason, both elements are essential. These two different subjects are not separable but distinguishable within a complementary relationship. The work of man is somewhat overshadowed by the grandeur of the divine initiation in the baptism of the Spirit; nevertheless, particular human action in freedom is indispensable in the administration of the baptism of water. As a corollary of the integration of these two actions, a personal and communal relationship in freedom arises between God and man. James J. Buckley concisely explicates the nature of the relation between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of water in the following manner:

CD IV/4 depicts baptism as the differentiated unity between divine action (baptism in the Holy Spirit) and human action (baptism in water)....; the human action is united to the divine action insofar as the human action has its basis in Jesus' baptism and its goal in baptism with the Holy Spirit. In sum, the differentiated unity of divine and human action in baptism comes from and heads toward Jesus Christ; it is only in the movement from its

⁴⁵⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 102.

origin to its goal that divine action (baptism with the Holy Spirit) and human action (baptism with water) form a differentiated unity.⁴⁶⁰

The divine change, the baptism of the Spirit, remains as completely subjective divine action, and that of water remains as completely subjective moral action. The divine change provides the principle of unity of these two actions, but the two mutually give meaning to each other. With regard to the distinction between water baptism and the baptism of the Spirit, it is clear that Barth construes them on the basis of the trinitarian perichoretic union of the Three Persons, without confusion or loss of distinctive personal characteristics of each Person. In Barth's view, the baptism of the Spirit is the indisputable divine change of, and saving movement toward, human nature. On the other hand, the baptism of water is a sheer expression of moral gratitude for the divine saving work. Thus, the baptism of water plays a very important role in relation to communion with God, but it does not carry or impart any kind of grace or salvation to human being as a religious ritual.

In the light of Barth's exposition, the baptism of water is not a sacrament or mode of salvation.⁴⁶¹ It is only a human action responding to the divine invitation to the communion of salvation and love. Barth's distinctive perspective on the baptism of water as subjective human action differs from other mainstream theological positions, such as those of the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and even the Reformed Church. The positions of these mainstream churches may change to some degree, but these traditions hold the view that the baptism of water is a sacrament in essence and a sign instituted and powered by Jesus Christ Himself. These traditions regard water baptism as a sacrament that is instituted and governed by the Lord Jesus with sanctifying and redeeming power. For these teachings, divine action is the effective driving force in the administration of the water baptism, as in the baptism of the Spirit. In this process, man is only a passive spectator of the divine change. Water baptism is not a mere self-determined human expression of gratitude for the divine grace. It cannot be

⁴⁶⁰ James J. Buckley, "Christian Community, Baptism, and Lord's Supper", in Karl Barth, ed. by John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 204.

⁴⁶¹ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 192. Also see, Barth's C.L., p. 46.

exclusive human action but a divinely instituted medium imparting sanctification and salvation. As the water in baptism represents the redeeming and purifying blood of Jesus, one encounters the Lord and His blood in the baptism of water. Hence, redemption and sanctification occur in the baptism of water. The baptism of water becomes the very *means* of human salvation and sanctification.

However, against these perspectives, Barth has already established the principle that the baptism of water, as subjective moral action, is performed by the community of the baptised according to the candidates' own determination and ardent, free request. Barth holds that the baptism of water is human action in obedience to Jesus Christ and placing hope in Him. Baptism as merely moral obedience and movement toward the Lord inaugurates a personal relationship to Him. According to Barth:

Its meaning is to be sought simply and narrowly in that which takes place in it—which can and should and will take place in it, since true Christian baptism is a human action—according to God's command, in the freedom which is given by God for it, and in orientation to Him. The crux of a correct answer to the question of the meaning of baptism lies in a strict correlation and a no less strict distinction between the human action as such and the divine action from which it springs, on whose basis it is possible, and towards which it moves.⁴⁶²

The personal relationship is the fruit of the integration between the baptism of the Spirit and that of water. It is the dynamic characteristic of the newly generated mode of existence, created exclusively in mutual recognition and true love in absolute freedom. Divine action among and on people enlightens them and inspires their own response to it. However, the baptism as their concrete response to God's calling remains a human action, not a divinely empowered redeeming sacrament. One can imagine the dynamics of a conversation in the relation between the baptism of the Spirit and that of water. In conversation, at least two independent persons exchange ideas or opinions. When one talks, the other listens or vice versa. If only one talks from the beginning to the end and the other side cannot or does not respond, it is not conversation. Only when the other person responds does conversation occur. Like the dynamics of conversation, in

⁴⁶² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 134.

the baptism of the Holy Spirit God wants to initiate communion by enabling man to join in freely. In return, as his first response to God's invitation to the communion, a man is baptised in water at his own self-determined request, by manifesting his faith in God. The baptism of water is for man the first moment of participation in the divine communion. Thus the baptism of the Spirit must be divine action, and the baptism of water must be moral action. For this reason, the baptism of water is not exclusively divine action or sacrament. It does not impart redeeming grace or sanctifying divine power. It is purely a moral action of obedience and hope in response to a divine invitation to the communion.

The baptism of water itself is a concrete expression of man's conversion, his turning away from an old mode of existence and entering into a newly generated life.⁴⁶³ This conversion takes place exclusively grounded in the revelation of the salvific work and word of God.⁴⁶⁴ It is solely indebted to the gracious divine revelation in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, it is man's own self-determined decision and act in relation to God who is the foundation and origin.

One cannot extol and praise baptism more highly than by understanding and describing it as the concrete form of this human action and seeking and finding its meaning in the fact that in its execution a man joins with the Christian community, and it with him, in justifying God, in confessing and declaring that he hungers and thirsts after God's righteousness.⁴⁶⁵

As the conversion through water baptism is an exclusively human act, one cannot ascribe a sacramental meaning to the baptism of water. Through his own concrete existential action in relation to divine revelation, a person first joins the community of Jesus. This action in response to the divine revelation and word is geared toward the unity of a Christian with the Lord Jesus and His body. Consequently, there is a clear distinction in reality between the before and after of his conversion through baptism. Until he is baptised in water, he has no real relation to the community. He is not considered as a part of the community. The union with the community happens only in the baptism of water. Before the

⁴⁶³ Barth, C.L., p. 46.

⁴⁶⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 139.

⁴⁶⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/4, pp. 143-144.

baptism of water, the community considers him only as one of many possible candidates for whom Jesus died but not as its member yet. Thus, until he is baptised, he has no share or part in the community and does not belong to it.

The new way of life which can be initiated only in the baptism of water characterises man's conversion through which he is recognized and accepted as a member of the community and receives and shares divinely bestowed gifts and divinely commissioned tasks in the community. The significance of the baptism is the conversion that has to be undergone by a man in collaboration with the community and by the community in collaboration with the man in God's promise and command.

It, too, obeys the command of Jesus Christ and grasps His promise by baptising this man, by accepting his knowledge and confession as valid, not merely for to-day but also for to-morrow, by publicly acknowledging him as a member, by declaring solidarity with him in brotherly union. Hence a man has himself baptised, and is baptised by the community, not in his own name, nor in that of the community, but in the name, work and word of God in Jesus Christ, in relation to the grace of the everlasting covenant which became and is and will be act and revelation in His coming and history, in the name, then, of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.⁴⁶⁶

The baptism of water is indispensably related to the command of Jesus Christ. The community cannot be an exclusive or clandestine religious society closed to those knocking at its door in the name of the Lord. The door of the community is open to those who grasp and follow the grace of the everlasting divine covenant revealed in His work and Word. The community only acts in accordance with the divine command. When man knocks at the door of the community in faith, it opens up widely before him, and the promised new life is given to him through baptism by the community. Through baptism, man responds with his confession of faith to divine work and word before the community which is the ground of faith and new life. In response to man's confession and conversion through baptism, the community also confesses that it acknowledges him as a vital part of the body of the Lord Jesus. Consequently, in the brotherly union in baptism the

⁴⁶⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 148.

community and the candidate together establish a solidarity by which they testify to the grace of the everlasting divine covenant and are ready to fulfil divinely commissioned tasks. Indeed, the candidate begins his newly generated life in the community in union with other Christian fellows, yet not submerged in it. He exists and participates in the network of relations as a vital part of the community, but with his own unrepeatable unique individuality.

Infant Baptism

From the beginning of Christianity, baptism was generally accepted as the universal mode of entry into the community of faith. With respect to the patristic tradition, infant baptism became virtually universal from the second century up until the Reformation.⁴⁶⁷ However, this practice was seriously rejected by Anabaptists due to the lack of substantial biblical evidence. In the light of Barth's exposition as explained so far, the baptism of water is a self-determined response to God's gracious calling in the knowledge of His work and word. Barth believes that the baptised as well as the baptisers are supposed to know consciously what they are doing when they have themselves baptised. On the condition of the candidates' own request and desire, the Church baptises them. The confession of the candidate's own faith in public is the essential constituent of baptism.

It is self-evident that the baptism which Barth contends for requires the capability of autonomous thought and action on the side of the candidates who may be called as such to conversion, obedience, hope and decision of faith. The crux of the question is the suitability of an infant, an unconscious child, as the candidate of the baptism of water. In infant baptism, baptism is to be performed regardless of the candidate's conscious or voluntary decision and faith. Barth's argument on baptism ultimately points to a lack of confidence and trust in the validity of infant baptism that from the Patristic era to the Reformation has been accepted as the rule in churches and practised in them without any significant doubt or challenge.

⁴⁶⁷ Barth, C.L., p. 46.

In the era of the Reformation, Luther and Calvin and their followers seriously questioned the authority and validity of the papacy due to a lack of substantial biblical basis and material evidence. They did not equally question the validity of infant baptism, even though they could not have ascribed any theological and biblical validity to it. The Reformers approved the legitimacy of infant baptism on the basis of long Church tradition whereby infant baptism had been celebrated and become the rule in Christendom.⁴⁶⁸ Even though both the papacy and infant baptism based their foundations on Church tradition and not on the command of God in the Bible, the churches of the Reformation did not refute infant baptism, unlike their firm rejection of papal authority. With regard to the Reformers' inconsistent verdict on infant baptism, Barth reinvestigates and challenges the legitimacy of infant baptism in Christendom by reference to biblical and historical sources.

Barth initially sets out relevant biblical references to baptism in order to substantiate his own perspective on the principle of the administration of the baptism of water. The common denominator of the various citations on the processes of baptism, especially in Acts, is each individual's own request for baptism only after they are convicted by and received the word of God.

[T]he process as described in Acts 2:37, 8:12, 38, 10:44, 16:14, 32, 22:16 is as follows. Individuals or groups have been reached by the Word of God, i.e., the apostolic preaching. Having heard it, they face the question: What shall we do? They want to obey the demand for confession of sins, for faith, for conversion. They do obey it. In keeping with this, in visible execution of this act of obedience, they ask for baptism and have themselves baptised. In all these accounts baptism has the character of an action in which there is a common affirmation by the candidates of the Gospel preached and received, which involves their conscious and voluntary participation, and which rests upon and takes place in an act of free decision. In these accounts it is not even conceivable that infants might be the recipients of baptism.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 167. Also see, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book IV. Ch. XV. 8. When Calvin advocates the practice of infant baptism, he appeals to common sense to support its validity, referring to the social context rather than any biblical evidence.

⁴⁶⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, pp. 179-180.

First of all, the candidate needs a point of contact with the Word of God that leads him to faith and *metanoia*. The point of contact occurs when the candidate's mind and soul is convicted and convinced by hearing the Word. As the apostle Paul testifies in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." When people listen to and receive the word of God, they have faith generated by the living and dynamic word that moves and convicts their hearts from the moment of hearing it. Here, the conviction of their sins by the word of God generates a concrete moral action as a sign of their faith. Consequently, they ask for the baptism of water. This process of baptism must be accompanied by their own conscious and self-determined faith and action.⁴⁷⁰ As Barth contends, "Everything that has been said about baptism as such, and perhaps about the sacrament in general, and perhaps in explanation of the basic principles which are normative in this whole sphere, should be given its due in the doctrine of infant baptism."⁴⁷¹ In the light of this statement, no exception is offered for infants who are ignorant and unconscious of the word of God and are excluded from baptism.

Barth also deals with other references that might give potential evidence for the possibility of infant baptism, such as Acts. 16:15, 18:8, and 1 Cor. 1:16. However, he claims that these verses testify to the baptism of entire houses or households in which there might have been infants; nevertheless, these verses also speak of individuals' own faith for baptism.⁴⁷² Barth contends:

The Christian life cannot be inherited as blood, gifts, characteristics and inclinations are inherited. No Christian environment, however genuine or sincere, can transfer this life to those who are in this environment. For these, too, the Christian life will and can begin only on the basis of their own liberation by God, their own decision. Its beginning—this is no part of their distinction but would run contrary to it—cannot be made for them by others through the fact that, without being asked about their own decision, they receive baptism.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ Hans Küng as a respected Catholic theologian also advocates this point by claiming that "True, man's decision to enter the community must be a free decision in faith (or in the case of infant baptism he must ratify his entry into the community in some way subsequently, by a conscious act of faith.) But this act is only possible in response to God's call."

⁴⁷¹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 171.

⁴⁷² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 180.

⁴⁷³ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 184.

Gorringe also advocates Barth's view of infant baptism by claiming that "Barth had to refuse the possibility of infant baptism, which completely obscured its character as the human response to God's initiative."⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, Helmut Thielicke also shares the same view as Barth by calling infant baptism an obvious "abuse" of the Church.⁴⁷⁵ He points out the importance of "personal faith and decision" in baptism in contrast to people's misunderstanding of baptism as "a magical medicine which works independently of individual awareness."⁴⁷⁶ Relationship with God can happen only through personal encounter with and conviction by the word of God. Even if an infant is part of a Christian household, it is certainly related with its members physically, not spiritually. Salvation is personally given to man when he receives the divine grace through His word.⁴⁷⁷ The fact that its parents or families are Christians does not warrant or delegate the infant's faith. The very inception of the Christian life and baptism starts from individual and autonomous faith in the revealed word of God. Barth's position in this way also precludes delegation of the infant's faith to its parents. Christian faith is a matter of the personal relation only between God and man. Nothing can intervene in the relationship or substitute for each individual's faith. When we hear and believe in the message of God, the transforming work of the living and dynamic word of God occurs in us and motivates our own decision and commitment in response to divine grace which is manifested in baptism in the concrete form of moral action.

Barth also refers to Tertullian's work as one of the primitive and original documents that confirms and substantiates the indispensability of personal request and self-determined action in the administration of baptism. In the light of Tertullian's exposition on the baptism of water in his little work, *De baptismo*, he

⁴⁷⁴ Gorringe, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony*, p. 263. See, also, Dieter Schellong's "Karl Barth als Theologe der Neuzeit" in *Karl Barth und die Neuzeit, Theologische Existenz Heute* (Munich, Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1985), p. 72. In this text, Schellong considers Barth's rejection of infant baptism as the measure of one's understanding of the essence of Barth's theology.

⁴⁷⁵ Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith* Vol. III, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 274.

⁴⁷⁶ Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith* Vol. III, pp. 275, 279.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith* Vol. III, p. 279.

places clear emphasis on faith, that one must receive baptism on the basis of one's own determination and entreaty. Only after receiving baptism through one's own decision and faith, can one join the community of faith. Barth writes of Tertullian's point of argument in *De baptismo* in the following manner:

This is the clear and strong argument with which the author obviously combats in this work the tendency towards infant baptism which was already emerging at the end of the 2nd century at least in Carthage. He issues a strong warning (c.18) against entrusting baptism to anyone blindly. To the verse: "Give to him that asketh," which was adduced by the champions of infant baptism, he opposes Mt. 7:6: "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine," and 1 Tim 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man." He thus suggests that in the text: "Give to him that asketh," if appeal is made to this saying which strictly applies only to almsgiving, the word "ask" should be taken seriously.⁴⁷⁸

Even in its early period, there must have been diverse and disturbing opinions with regard to infant baptism within the Christian community. The growth of Christianity in various cultural and religious traditions must have been affected by them and this brought about diverse streams of theological understanding and biblical interpretation. Infant baptism must have been influenced by various cultural and pagan traditions, apart from the biblical teachings. In the early emergence of systematic and apologetic discourses on Christianity, Tertullian develops his point of view grounded on biblical evidence that baptism must be given only to those who ask for it. In contrast to the concrete biblical references to the administration and validity of the baptism of water, infant baptism and its theological worth are not separately discussed in the Bible. In order to preserve its value and original teaching, Tertullian insists that one must receive baptism with clear consciousness and one's own decision.

The great contribution of the Reformers is the recognition of the Bible as the source and rule of Christianity and the Church. For the Reformation theologians, the Bible was the foundation of Christian doctrines and ecclesiastical practices. It was worth more than any other church traditions. It would not be too much to say that the work of Martin Luther and that of John Calvin represent the

⁴⁷⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 187.

Reformation. Their insightful works brought about the dismantling, modification and innovation of Christian doctrines and various Church traditions. Most of all, their rejection of papal authority generated a new line of Christian community. Most of the reforming works were supported by specific biblical reference. However, infant baptism, which was one of many parts of the generally practised Church traditions lacking any convincing scriptural reference, was neither subject to the same depth of analysis as many other parts, nor seriously criticized by the leaders of the Reformation, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin.

Luther and Infant Baptism

Luther's thoughts about infant baptism are not always consistent but reveal a process of development. Here, Barth brings out one of Luther's early positions on the subject. In view of Luther's early understanding, nothing is valid or acceptable in the absence of personal faith. The faith of each individual legitimates the baptism of water as true response to divine calling. Barth construes Luther's position in the following way:

“Faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving divine water.” It is not merely that baptism would be a mere washing without the Word of God, as earlier in the Greater Catechism. No, “without faith it is of no profit even though it is in itself a divinely superabundant treasure...What is not faith...receives nothing.” God's works, including His work in baptism, “do not exclude but demand faith, for without faith one cannot grasp them.”⁴⁷⁹

It is certain that Luther's early position advocates that man is *saved* not through anything else but faith, *sola fide*. The faith of an individual cannot be delegated by someone else. It must be one's own personal faith. Faith is an absolute prerequisite before or at least during baptism itself.⁴⁸⁰ Without the faith of the candidate, the baptism of water becomes nothing but meaningless ablution. The faith of the candidate gives true meaning and life through baptism. Baptism is the nexus where divine command and man's faith are perichoretically integrated and

⁴⁷⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 172.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Buckley, “Christian Community, Baptism and Lord's Supper”, p. 202. Also see Jenson's “The Church and the Sacraments”, pp. 219-221.

manifested in public. This position is nothing more than the consistent application of the foundational Reformation slogan, “*sola fide*.”

However, in stark contrast to his former premise, Luther’s view on baptism with reference to faith was drastically changed years later by abandoning the absolute necessity of faith. In his later position, Luther deals with only the Word of God in the baptism with water. The faith of the children in infant baptism is not a prerequisite but the command of God. In Luther’s perspective in the Greater Catechism, infant baptism is valid in so far as it is executed in accordance with the divine command. Barth construes Luther’s later changed perspective on baptism in the following manner:

“It is of profit if you are baptized as by God’s command and order, in God’s name...” Do we not also read in the *Short Catechism*: “Water, of course, does nothing, but the Word of God as it is with and in the water, and faith as it trusts the Word of God in the water.” It is worth noting that in the corresponding place in the *Greater Catechism* the reference to faith is abandoned and there is mention only of the Word of God in the water. And how are we to harmonize with this premise, which is still quite plain in the Greater Catechism, the later saying in the section dealing with infant baptism: We thus say further that for us the greatest stress does not lie on whether the one baptised believes or not? Baptism is valid, we are now told, even though there is no faith. It is not valid because improperly received. For gold is no less gold even though a wicked woman wears it with sin and shame.⁴⁸¹

The crux of the problem lies in how one can reconcile Luther’s former perspective with his later one on baptism with regard to faith. Luther’s later view on baptism in relation to faith presupposes the occurrence of new dynamics in baptism in the relation between divine grace and faith, God’s command and man’s response. According to Luther’s former position of the absolute necessity of faith in baptism, the faith of the candidate in water as a constituent of baptism is its indispensable prerequisite. The candidate’s faith is integrated with divine redeeming action in the event of baptism. Thus, faith is the indispensable element that legitimates baptism. This perspective posits a serious relation between faith as human action, and God’s word as divine action.

⁴⁸¹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 172.

In contrast to the former, the latter position rejects any type of human action or work in dealing with divinely constituted sacramental baptism. Only the word of God and His command constitutes baptism and makes it valid, regardless of the faith of the baptised. It is certain that Luther's later changed perspective rejects the absolute necessity of faith in baptism. At the same time, it precludes any type of relation or integration between divine action and human action. It ultimately presupposes a different kind of dynamic in baptism from that of his earlier perspective. In this case, man becomes a mere passive recipient and spectator of baptism. Then, in view of the latter exposition, what does baptism really mean to man? What does concretely happen to man in water? Is baptism practised for the sake of baptism as God commands man to do without any direct effect on man? Is baptism a mere mandatory religious rite that is imposed upon man as a duty? In contrast to Barth, who regards baptism as the point of contact between divine grace and human faith in which as a result a complementary relationship arises between them, Luther's exposition and assertion on the baptism of water in relation to the word of God seems not to provide us with adequate answers for the above questions.

Calvin and Infant Baptism

In the case of Calvin, according to Barth's analysis, his exposition on baptism is no better than that of Luther. Barth criticises the discrepancy between Calvin's general exposition of sacrament and his special view on infant baptism in relation to the secret work of the Spirit. First, Barth discloses Calvin's definition of sacrament and its relation to faith in the following way:

According to Calvin the sacrament is like a seal which gives force to the contents of a letter.... The sacrament is a visible pledge of grace. It makes the faith of those who have been taught by the Holy Ghost *certior* (14, 6), *robustior et auctior*. It is a means to strengthen and increase faith (14, 9)...According to a very sharp expression which Calvin uses here, a sacrament received without faith will be the certain destruction of the Church: *certissimum Ecclesiae exitium* (14, 14). One has to speak, not incidentally but with the greatest emphasis, of the faith of those who receive baptism.... No matter how immature and imperfect it may be, it is

not a *fides implicita*, not a blind faith, not a faith which does not claim the reason and heart of the believer.⁴⁸²

As Barth analyses, Calvin puts great emphasis on the value of faith in the administration of baptism as well as other forms of sacraments. Here, the faith is not of someone else but the candidate's own. The faith of the candidate is a constituting element of baptism. Regardless of its degree of maturity, Calvin considers faith as a valid faith which qualifies the candidate to be baptised for his repentance and faith. Moreover, Barth points out that Calvin gives strong insight into the noetic nature of faith in the sacrament. Initially, man's faith grows by the revelation and instruction of the Holy Spirit, yet it is not perfect as it is. This imperfect faith must be completed later through the grace of God in baptism.

As Calvin claims, man's faith is generated in the moment of the revelation and instruction of the Holy Spirit. In the case of children before the age of discretion it is impossible to recognize divine revealed knowledge. Thus, as Barth points out, "Calvin suddenly goes to speak, not of the vicarious faith of parents and sponsors, but (far more positive than Luther) of an *aliqua pars gratiae* peculiar to baptised infants, of an *exigua scintilla*, of a *semen* of repentance and faith which is concealed in them in virtue of the *arcana operatio Spiritus*...."⁴⁸³ Through the miraculous hidden work of the Spirit, infants are baptised into future repentance and faith. Here, Barth questions, "How can there come forth from it a faith which according to his premises can consist only in knowledge and obedience?"⁴⁸⁴ He points out a palpable hiatus between Calvin's former assertion on faith in relation to sacrament and his later presupposition on infant faith that does not consist of knowledge or obedience.

Karl Barth's Verdict

According to Barth's contention, the two leading Reformation theologians seemed to fail to give substantial and consistent evidence for the validity of infant baptism. Barth sharply points out that their premises on both infant baptism and

⁴⁸² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 173.

⁴⁸³ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 173.

⁴⁸⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 173.

faith are inconsistent and self-contradictory. In the light of the Reformation slogan, *sola fide*, Luther and Calvin first presupposed the absolute necessity of the faith of the candidate in baptism regardless of the degree of maturity of his faith. However, they later invented a loophole based on non-biblical *church tradition* in order to advocate the validity of infant baptism. They were not bold enough to criticise fairly the historically miscarried sacrament, infant baptism. In this respect, they abandoned the principle of the Reformation, leading to inconsistency in their works. The crux of the matter for both Luther and Calvin with respect to infant baptism is the breaking down of the bipolar complementary relation between the initiation of the Holy Spirit and the faith of the Christian, between divine action and human action; there exists no freedom for man to accept God's command, but rather a one-sided dictatorial divine action.

In view of biblical evidence and historical and theological writings, Barth does not find any satisfactory material that legitimises infant baptism or convinces him of its validity. Consequently, he claims, "To all concerned: to theologians, for unfortunately even theology has not yet realised by a long way that infant baptism is an ancient ecclesiastical error; to Christian congregations and their pastors; to Church leaders, presbyterial, synodal or episcopal; to all individual Christians...."⁴⁸⁵ And he continues, "They have no freedom to commit this kind of treachery against God, who has enlightened and endowed them with His Spirit; against the community, which has baptised them with water in confirmation and attestation of this divine action; against themselves, upon whom this has come from God, and who have desired and received baptism from the community."⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 194.

⁴⁸⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 198.

Chapter VI

Barth's Trinitarian Moral Theology: the Christian Attitude of Faith, Obedience and Prayer in the Light of Analogy

Introduction

One of the distinctive features of Barth's theology highlighted by various theologians was the irreconcilable *hiatus* between God the mighty Creator and the sinful human creature. Regarding Barth's understanding of the doctrine of God, the alleged Kierkegaardian diastasis has been vividly portrayed during recent decades as theologians have put so much emphasis on Barth's works on the *divinity* of God. As a consequence, no doubt, the expressions such as "wholly other", "perpendicularly from above", and "infinite qualitative distinction" have typically been used to epitomise Barth's theological perspective on the relation between God and man. However, we must pay keen attention to the way Barth develops his own theological perspective on the relation of God to human nature. When he explicates his theology of ethics, Barth constructs three different stages, the doctrine of Creation, the doctrine of Reconciliation, and finally the doctrine of Redemption. The first two doctrines have been widely introduced to theologians and students of Karl Barth's works. In particular, Barth has written extensively on these subjects in the series of Church Dogmatics.

However, contrary to its significant value in his theological achievement, Barth's own doctrine of Redemption has not yet been widely recognized or appreciated by the students and theologians. So far as I know, few theological works have been published on Barth's doctrine of Redemption. In other words, Barth's overall theological insight into ethics has not yet been brought to light or appreciated fully. As Webster rightly claims regarding this matter, scholarship on Barth's theological writings on ethics is still at a rudimentary level.⁴⁸⁷ One of the major reasons for the poor academic endeavour regarding Barth's theology of Redemption is that Barth's theology has typically been delimited by the final theme of the unfinished Church Dogmatics, the doctrine of Reconciliation of

⁴⁸⁷ Webster, Barth's Moral Theology, p. 1.

Volume IV. However, the ultimate theme of the *opus magnum* is not the doctrine of Reconciliation but the doctrine of Redemption, that is concisely explained and summarised step by step in his posthumously published book, *Ethics*. Consequently, most readers of Barth's writings have failed to grasp the ultimate theme and stage of Barth's theology of ethics.

In order to gain a thorough understanding and establish unbiased criticism of Barth's theology of the relation of God to man, it is essential to consider each writing within the appropriate context. Especially, in dealing with the relation of God to man, Barth builds three different stages leading to his final thesis, the doctrine of Creation, the doctrine of Reconciliation, and the doctrine of Redemption. Moreover, in each stage, the nature of the relation of God to man is distinctive in relation to the other stages. If one misses reading any one of them, one will fail to grasp Barth's final understanding of the nature of the relation between God and man. Worst of all, by failing to view each writing within the right context, one may get the impression that Barth is surely not consistent.

However, the three stages of the doctrine of Creation, the doctrine of Reconciliation and the doctrine of Redemption have to be understood in company with one another and as a whole, along with the nature of Barth's complementary dialectic and analogy, in order to gain a right understanding of Barth's trinitarian moral theology. In order to grasp the trinitarian nature of Barth's moral theology in relation to spiritual divine action, we will deal with Barth's analogical use of the περιχώρησις regarding the three elements of the Christian attitude, faith, obedience and prayer, in the light of Barth's famous three kinds of analogy, *analogia fidei*, *analogia actionis*, and *analogia relationis*.

The Christian Attitude

In the context of Barth's theology of Redemption, the Christian does not merely exist under the universal lordship of God, but he recognizes and affirms His lordship as is demanded of him. In this way, man experiences the universal lordship of God in Jesus Christ. Moreover, he even practises the lordship by participating in it from within. Consequently, the Christian has true knowledge

with regard to the providence and universal lordship of God. The Christian is certainly affected and ruled under the providence and lordship of Jesus Christ in this world-occurrence. However, at the same time, he participates in them from within by recognising and consenting to the providence and lordship of God. In other words, the Christian has a kind of right understanding with the world-governance of God. Barth insists, "All this is because he has an 'understanding' with the source from which everything derives, from which directly or indirectly everything happens to him; the 'understanding' of the creature with its Creator, which is, for him, that of the child with its father."⁴⁸⁸

However, the knowledge of the Christian in the matter of the providence and universal lordship of God is not passive in nature or mere speculation or contemplation without concrete action. It is not only about conformation but also about the dynamic action and living reality of his existence. Barth defines this knowledge of the Christian as an *existential* attitude manifested and actualized in the world-governance of God and creaturely phenomena.

It is, therefore, an attitude, but a dynamic attitude, in which the Christian, being totally claimed, *participates* in the operation of God and creaturely occurrence: contemplating to be sure, but active as well; perceiving, but also working; and both in such a way that it is *quite impossible to separate* the one from the other, because proceeding from the one he is always leaping along the way to the other. It is all perceiving and understanding and knowing. But, as we had to add at once, it is all affirming and approving; it is all a willingness and readiness to *co-operate*; it is all thankfulness.⁴⁸⁹

The Christian attitude within the universal lordship of God is never abstractive without active involvement in reality. It is in nature dynamic; the Christian actively participates in the work of God as a co-subject of the divine lordship over all the creatures. It demands both *knowing* and *practising* the divine universal lordship in the midst of present reality. If the Christian attitude is not mere speculation or mere contemplation, then how can the Christian attitude be operative and real? In what manner can the Christian attitude be manifested and

⁴⁸⁸ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 243.

⁴⁸⁹ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 244. (Italics mine)

actualised? In this matter of actualisation of the Christian attitude and participation in the work of God, Barth posits three concrete modes of the Christian attitude in existential action in relation to participation in spiritual divine action:

The providence and universal lordship of God are not merely true to him, but in this repetition they are actual...They are actual to him in *faith*, in *obedience*, and in *prayer*. These are the three forms of this dynamic and totally Christian attitude...if it is the Christian attitude, none of the three must be omitted or stunted, none must obscure or absorb the others, none must try to replace or crowd out the others. If only one of the three is completely missing, our attitude is not a Christian one.⁴⁹⁰

In faith, obedience and prayer man can participate in and practise the providence and universal lordship of God. In such a way, the Christian attitude becomes real and operative in connection with the sovereign lordship of God. One thing that we have to pay keen attention to is the unique inner relation between the three forms of the one Christian attitude. The three forms are mutually constitutive in essence by enhancing each other's distinctive qualities and constituting a balanced whole. At this point, we should not miss Barth's analogous use of the pattern of the inner dynamics of the trinitarian modes of divine Being in the light of the dynamic notion of *περιχώρησις* in which the three Persons of God mutually interpenetrate at all points without confusion and loss of personal identity, as well as without domination of any Person. Barth's analogous use of the pattern of the perichoretic relation of the Trinity is explicitly manifested in the following statement:

[W]e cannot possibly understand the three forms as three parts of the Christian attitude which limit and complete each other, so that the Christian first believes, then has to obey, and finally must pray; or first believes, then has to pray and finally must obey; or first obeys, and then has to pray and finally must believe. We should note that divisions of this kind lead immediately and necessarily to the position in which we are dealing with a law....⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 245. (Italics mine)

⁴⁹¹ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 245.

The three forms of the Christian attitude are not individually divided as *a certain part* of the whole attitude. Rather, the three forms of the Christian attitude are distinguishably related but not separable from one another. Thus, Barth warns us not to misconceive the Christian attitude and its forms in a numerical, individual sense. The three forms are relational and complementary in a way that makes them be and comprise one unique Christian attitude. This may be understood by comparing the relation of the forms of the Christian attitude with the relation of the three Persons of God in one divine Being. As each of the three Persons in the inner life of the Trinity is distinguishable but not separable from the others; rather, each person includes the other two; in the same way, each of the three forms of the Christian attitude comprises the other two forms. Barth gives insight into this aspect explicitly in the following manner:

The Christian attitude is the being of the Christian as graciously awakened by the Word of God which always gives and always demands. It is his being in the freedom of the Gospel, not his being under a law. But seen in this freedom of the Gospel *each of three forms is also the whole; each of the three forms includes the other two within itself.*⁴⁹²

The three forms of the Christian attitude, faith, obedience and prayer, as a way of experiencing and participating in the providence and universal lordship, follow the pattern of the perichoretic trinitarian relation of the three divine Persons. This attitude is nothing but the very way of being of the Christian. The three forms of the Christian attitude are the way of participating in divine action. In such a way, man actualises his eschatological reality and his truest being in the freedom of the Gospel, not in the bondage of a law. The freedom of the Gospel constitutes the true being of the Christian. The Christian freely affirms his being through the Christian attitude. The Christian attitude that is the mode of being of the Christian follows the dynamics of the inner spiritual life of the Trinity, each form being distinguishable but not separable as each form comprises the other two within itself. Thus, if any one of the three forms of the Christian attitude is absent, it is not the Christian attitude.

⁴⁹² Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 246. (Italics mine)

The Christian attitude as existential human action plays a cooperative part in providence and universal divine lordship. The Christian attitude as human action is distinguishable within the universal divine lordship but inseparably related with it in the Holy Spirit. Man in Jesus Christ becomes a child of God and recognizes God the Creator as his eternal Father. Man as a divine child is no more a stranger to God the Creator. He does not just gaze at His work. Rather, as a divine child along with Jesus the Son he actively cooperates and helps his Father's business. In other words, man in Jesus recognizes, participates in and helps God's work from within.

In doing what he has to do as a man who in Jesus Christ has come to know God as his Father and himself as a child of God, the Christian is the creature which not merely contemplates the work of the divine providence and lordship from without, but co-operates in it from within. What we have particularly to emphasize in this connection is that the Christian attitude to the divine work does not consist in looking at it, but in co-operating with it.⁴⁹³

However marginal it may be, the Christian attitude plays an *indispensable* role as it is distinguished and recognized as an active and operative element in relation to the work of divine providence and universal divine lordship. Man as a child of the Father is a qualified partner of the divine enterprise. Man's action counts, but not in a sense of *salvation by work* because divine action along with human action is also indispensable in it. Existential human action is an indispensable element that co-constitutes the spiritual relationship with God. With regard to "faith", for example, Barth says,

By this time it should be clear why it is so important that we should maintain that *faith is altogether the work of God and altogether the work of man*; that it is the complete enslavement of man and also the complete liberation of man. If it were not all these things, it would not achieve what it does achieve. It achieves it in so far as it is all these things.⁴⁹⁴

What is the underlying logic and purpose of Barth in saying "faith is altogether divine action and at the same time is human action"? Barth makes here a clear distinction between spiritual divine action and existential human action but these

⁴⁹³ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 254.

⁴⁹⁴ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 250. (Italics mine)

two actions are indissolubly related and united. Thus, when one refers to faith, it is completely spiritual divine action and at the same time completely existential human action. Here, Barth makes a very interesting and bold comparison with the dynamics of the trinitarian modes of God. Barth employs an analogous use of the trinitarian pattern of relation in dealing with faith as a Christian attitude.

This suggests first that man has an indispensable part in the work of the divine providence as an active participator. Existential human action is distinguishable yet inseparable from spiritual divine action. In dealing with faith that is the work of both God and man, spiritual divine work completely penetrates into and is wholly identifiable with existential human action, and vice versa. Barth's interpretation of faith as a cooperative work of both spiritual divine action and existential human action follows the pattern of *περιχώρησις*. The two elements mutually constitute the validity of each action as fully divine and fully human without losing the uniqueness of each part, and co-inhere without any confusion and separation, as in the distinctive characteristics of *περιχώρησις*.

Moreover, Barth's following statement substantially proves his intention of employing the analogous use of the concept of *περιχώρησις*. When Barth explains the unity and the totality of the Christian attitude, he refers to the dynamics of *περιχώρησις* as essential elements of the Christian attitude. Barth says,

We are bold to make the comparison that, as the three Trinitarian modes of the divine being do not limit and complete each other as parts of the Godhead, but are the one God in a threefold identity, so that *each of the modes includes the other two within itself and is within the others*, so the faith and obedience and prayer of the Christian are the one Christian attitude, and they are all individually that which the others are as well. If faith is really the faith of the true Christian attitude, it is also obedience and prayer, and prayer is faith and obedience. Yet the distinction, i.e., the peculiar emphasis and standpoint and even life of faith and obedience and prayer is just as indispensable as is the distinction between the mode of being in our confession of the triune God, for the unity and totality of the Christian attitude is never actual or visible *in abstracto*, but only in the three forms. A reversion either to the neglect of any one of the forms in favour of the others, or to the totalitarianism of any one at the expense of the others, cannot be justified on the score that we consider them to be identical in essence, just as *in Trinitarian teaching the doctrine of the*

perichoresis of the three divine modes of being cannot mean that ultimately we are returning to the modalistic heresy.⁴⁹⁵

The one Christian attitude of faith, obedience and prayer is completely existential human action constituted by spiritual divine action. It is not a union of actions confined to a creaturely level, with no relation with divine action. Spiritual divine action is involved with existential human action in each element of the Christian attitude. As faith is altogether divine action and altogether human action, the one Christian attitude consisting of faith, obedience and prayer is altogether human action and altogether divine action. Barth clearly refers to the *Trinitarian modes of the divine Being* as the model of the inner dynamics of the Christian attitude. The analogous relation between faith and obedience and prayer is trinitarian and perichoretic in essence. Hence, the Christian attitude is a perichoretically-unified work of both spiritual divine action and existential human action. Barth gives further and concrete explications on faith, obedience and prayer that are both divine action and human action, in the light of the trinitarian modes of the divine Being, in the Church Dogmatics. He warns not to fall into modalism as one loses balance and puts more emphasis on certain action.

Faith in the Light of *Analogia Fidei*

The crux of the matter is that the Church Dogmatics is widely read by students and theologians, but it does not offer them a complete picture of Barth's theological insight into the relation between God and man. The Church Dogmatics we have now is an incomplete series of theological themes, from which, unfortunately, the most vital theme in the relation of God and man is missing, that is, the doctrine of Redemption, without which it is difficult to figure out Barth's ultimate position on the relation of God to man and man to God. Neither the doctrine of Creation nor the doctrine of Reconciliation can do justice to this. Barth was not able to produce his proposed fifth volume on the doctrine of Redemption, in which he would have dealt with issues such as the Holy Spirit as Redeemer, the eschatological manifestation of man, the divine sonship of man,

⁴⁹⁵ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 246. (Italics mine)

and man as a partner in divine work. His Church Dogmatics was published in the order of the doctrine of the Word of God, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Creation, and finally the doctrine of Reconciliation. So far, many theologians have worked on and tried to analyse Barth's theological insight into the relation of God to man in terms of Creation and Reconciliation, but not of the doctrine of Redemption in the Holy Spirit. Although volume V was never written, the importance of the doctrine of Redemption is apparent throughout the first four volumes. As Barth claims in his Ethics, he makes a *dramatic distinction* between the first two contexts, Creation and Reconciliation, and the final context, Redemption:

An ethics that thinks only in terms of creation or of the status of sin and grace usually *cannot do justice* to the fact that, beyond our being as God's creatures and as sinners saved by grace, we are claimed in a way that cannot be deduced from those formulae, and, that, precisely in the Christian life as it manifests itself in history, apart from phenomena that can be explained in terms of those two aspects, we always find others that very obviously cannot be reduced to those categories....⁴⁹⁶

Within these contexts, there still exists the ever-dividing *diastasis* in the relation of spiritual divine Being and existential human beings. Man cannot overcome the limits of creature and forgiven sinner or avoid the death by which his being is to be terminated. Consequently, within these contexts it is natural and proper to use expressions like "wholly other", "perpendicularly from above" and "infinite qualitative distinction". Within these conditions, man has no nexus to communion with God and everlasting life; he cannot participate in the divine nature or be born again in the *Holy Spirit* to be a child of God yet. Within the scope of these two aspects, man is destined to be separated from eternal God and perish in death as a mortal creature.

However, there is an eschatological aspect of human reality that overcomes the limitations inherent in being mortal creatures and forgiven sinners. The true and final reality of man that Barth describes is manifested in the doctrine of Redemption in the *Holy Spirit*. According to Barth, the future reality and the

⁴⁹⁶ Barth, Ethics, p. 470. (Italics mine)

most real being of man is his spiritual divine sonship, the reality of his eternal future reaching into his present in promise. To be a child of God, one has to be adopted through the Holy Spirit as a child of God that participates in the divine nature. These events occur in the context of Redemption in which the *diastasis* between God and man has to be removed. In the contexts of Creation and Reconciliation, there is still a stumbling block in the way of participating in the nature of God and becoming a child of God, as there remain un-unifiable elements between the spiritual divine nature and the existential human nature because they are wholly, qualitatively, and infinitely different from each other.

1. The Word of God and the Divine Sonship of Man

Through baptism with the Holy Spirit, man becomes a child of God in Jesus Christ. Becoming a child of God means literally a divine child. As Barth claims, “[T]hey are no less really the sons of God than He is primarily the eternal Son of the eternal Father. Thus the statement: ‘Ye are all the children of God’ (Gal. 3:26), is never to be expounded as though it were not meant strictly.”⁴⁹⁷ Man can participate in the divine nature. Man is still a creature with flesh even after Redemption, but he becomes a being with eternal life given in Jesus Christ from above. Hence, his new being in the Holy Spirit never perishes, nor is it terminated by death.

We cannot deny that we are very much fascinated by the common perception and concept of God as a “wholly other” in the field of moral theology. However, Barth warns us to avoid such a *thoughtless concession* to the image and concept of God as “wholly other” than the human nature. He argues:

We viewed this ‘wholly other’ in isolation, abstracted and absolutized, and set it over against man, this miserable wretch—not to say boxed his ears with it—in such fashion that it continually showed greater similarity to the deity of the God of the philosophers than to the deity of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 533.

⁴⁹⁸ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 45.

Clearly, Barth opposes the concept of God who is defined only as wholly other being in isolation, that is unreachably lofty and unbearably holy to man.⁴⁹⁹ In light of Barth's remark mentioned above, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is different from that of the philosophers. The deity of God of the philosophers exists as a wholly differentiated being that cannot have a communal relation with existential human nature. This deity isolates himself from all other creatures. Conversely, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is *not* wholly other in isolation, abstracted and absolutized, and set over against man. The true image and concept of God proposed in the Bible as Barth contends is different from that of the philosophers to whom the deity is a fundamentally superior being, controlling mortal human nature. So what is the true biblical image of God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that Barth proposes?

The most distinctive feature of the relation of God to man revealed in Scripture is the spiritual divine sonship of man promised in Jesus the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. The divine sonship differentiates the deity of the Christian God from that of the philosophers. Man becomes a co-heir of God with the Son Jesus so that he can participate in the nature of God as a divine child. Man is not a child of God from the beginning; he is a creature of God the Creator. Through the once-for-all reconciling sacrifice of Jesus the Son of God for humankind, man has a chance to be righteous in God's sight by believing the Son Jesus. Even though man becomes a forgiven sinner by the Reconciliation of the Son Jesus, he is still not a child of God. Within the limits of Creation and Reconciliation, man is yet to become a child of God; he has no chance to become heir of God and joint heir with Christ, as scripture in Romans 8:17 describes man's final destiny. However, it is clear that man has a definite future reality that cannot be reached by himself alone. He is led by the Spirit of God through whom man knows his true reality as a divine child. This future reality is more than his present reality as created by God and reconciled in the Son Jesus. It is the eschatological reality manifested in the Word of God and realised through the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul writes, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 270.

that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ....”⁵⁰⁰

The fact that man is created by God does not immediately make him a son of God. The relation of the mortal creature to the eternal Creator does not offer man a chance to participate in the divine nature. This relation, as Barth defines, is only that of “having an individual being that is determined by the strictly different being of the Creator.”⁵⁰¹ There is an irreconcilable *diastasis* between God the Creator and man the creature. Man is initially a created mortal being whose nature is essentially different from the eternal divine nature. Man as a creature cannot participate in the divine nature. However, as a child of God man's nature is regenerated in the Word and he participates in the divine nature and becomes an heir of God. In that sense, the relation of man as a child of God to God the Father in the Word of God is that of sharing the divine nature. Man as a child of God exists no more as an isolated individual being apart from his Father.

However, man's final reality as a child of God is not yet fully manifested. The divine sonship of man in a strict sense is man's future reality revealed to him now only in promise. Although the eschatological reality of man as a child of God has not been fully manifested yet, as Scripture testifies, it is the truest and most authentic being of man.⁵⁰² Scripture reveals the relation of man as a divine child to the heavenly Father in many different places.⁵⁰³ First of all, the Son Jesus teaches man to address God as “our Father.” Jesus does not teach them to pray as “my Father” or “your Father.” When Jesus teaches His disciples “our Father” in the invocation of God, He includes Himself in the word “our” as well as the human creature. The Father whom man addresses in the invocation of God is the same Father as the Son Jesus addresses. Elsewhere in Scripture, Paul writes, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”⁵⁰⁴ And the Apostle John

⁵⁰⁰ Romans 8: 16-17 (NIV).

⁵⁰¹ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 463.

⁵⁰² Barth, *Ethics*, p. 463.

⁵⁰³ The relevant references can be found in Matthew 4:17, 6:10, 24:45-46, 25: 1-13, Mark 1:15, Luke 11:12, Romans 8:23, Philippians 4:5, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 3:20.

⁵⁰⁴ Romans 8:14.

also testifies that “We should be called sons of God.”⁵⁰⁵ The fact that human creatures can become children of God led by *the Holy Spirit* is one of the most dramatic and enlightening theological issues in Scripture. Even though the possibility of man’s divine sonship has been revealed in various places in the Bible, this subject has not been a popular theme among Christian theologians. It may be because they have thought the distance between the eschatological truth and the present reality of man on earth irreconcilable. It may be because they have treated the divine sonship of man as a mere eschatological truth that is still to come at the imperceptible far end of history.

However, according to Barth, the eschatological truth does not deal only with final things that have to be fulfilled in a far distant future. He says, “[T]hat eschatological truth is truth as the future in the present... The distinctive feature of eschatological truth as such, however, is its presence not in the future but as the future, as coming to us.”⁵⁰⁶ The divine sonship of man as coming truth is eschatological truth, and its reality is not in the far distant future but present here and now as the future. The divine sonship that is given to man by the Son Jesus becomes real in and by the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is easy to overlook the importance of the divine sonship of all believers because the divine sonship cannot be reached through the relation of God to man either in Creation or in Reconciliation. The divine sonship becomes real “not in the light of creation, but only in the light of the goal of creation, of completed creation, to which the present creation only points....”⁵⁰⁷ Man’s true reality should not be confined within the limits of Creation and Reconciliation in which man still exists as a qualitatively different being from God.

However, the true reality of man as a child of God that is the ultimate goal of Creation is already manifested by the Holy Spirit, and Redemption is present and real to man because the goal of Creation is not in an untouchable future that is to come. In light of 1 John 3:2 (“We are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be”), Barth claims:

⁵⁰⁵ 1 John 3:1.

⁵⁰⁶ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 465.

⁵⁰⁷ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 463.

The future as such is not absent, and therefore we cannot say that what it brings, our own reality, is absent. It would not be adequately described if we were to say simply that it lies in the future. For our future is not just the future. It is the future in the present. We have the content. We are what we shall be.⁵⁰⁸

The truth of man's divine sonship is not just in the future, in a vague and unreal sense, but it is a coming truth that is not remote but real and close to man as the Kingdom of God is at hand. Man's eschatological reality as a child of God is not fully known or manifested in the present, but it is here and now in the Holy Spirit. The fact that Christians are the children of God here and now is true and real even though their reality has not yet been made known. Thus, Barth insists, "Having in promise is the having which characterizes this object, our future reality."⁵⁰⁹ Man receives the divine sonship here and now in promise; that means he becomes and exists as a child of God in *faith* with the help of the Holy Spirit. Man receives the promise of God revealed to him in *faith* that is both divine action of the Holy Spirit and existential human action of a personal choice.

Although his eschatological reality as a child of God has not yet been manifested, man knows his reality as it shall be in *faith*. Thus, to have the divine sonship in promise is to have it in *faith*. Man knows and receives the divine sonship by believing in the Word revealed to him through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Barth explains this aspect in the following manner:

In the Word, in the Son of God, in his relation to God the Father, or, concretely in Jesus Christ, I am myself God's child, a partaker, according to 2 Peter 1:4, not merely of the undeserved good-pleasure of God the Creator, nor merely of the unmerited good-pleasure of God the Reconciler, but a partaker of the divine nature, i.e., as truly dear and pleasing to God—for this is what the image of father and child denotes, as he is dear and pleasing to himself, or, from our standpoint, as much a part of God as we are of ourselves, as parent and child, without being one person, and with all the distance that the relationship also denotes, are of one blood. Not in himself, but as the eternal Father of his eternal Word, as the eternal Speaker of his eternal Word, or, concretely again, in Jesus Christ, God is the Father of men. And not in themselves, but as those whom God has loved from all eternity in his Son, as the hearers of his Word, or,

⁵⁰⁸ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 465.

⁵⁰⁹ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 466.

concretely, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, men are the children of God.⁵¹⁰

Man becomes a child of God exclusively through believing the Word of God, Jesus Christ. There is no other way! His unique relation to God the Father opens up the way for man in general to be children of God. Jesus as “the prototype of the sonship of believers”,⁵¹¹ is right to be called the first born among many brothers and the eldest brother to all believers. Jesus the first Son of God is also the believer’s first brother through whom man finds access to God and knows himself as the Son is to the Father. Jesus the Son of God would not be called the first born among many brothers if believers were merely of the undeserved good-pleasure of the Creator, nor merely of the undeserved good-pleasure of the Reconciler. Man becomes a partaker of the divine nature in such a way that he becomes a child of God, and the Father of Jesus the Son becomes man’s Father. In this manner and for this reason, the divine sonship of man is eschatological, coming truth.

With respect to the relation established between God and man by the God-man Jesus Christ, there is no more *diastasis* that prevents man from being a partaker of the divine nature and becoming a divine child. God becomes man’s Father and man His child. As Barth explicates, “The metaphor of father and child denotes an indissoluble and irreversible relation. Beyond the antithesis of being and non-being, beyond all dialectic, it is true in Jesus Christ that God is our Father and we are his children.”⁵¹² Thus, man participates in the nature of God and becomes a brother of the Son of God, Jesus, calling God his Father. As parents and children are of one blood, man and God in Jesus are of one blood and nature. Otherwise, God would not be man’s Father or the Son Jesus his brother.

This eschatological reality of man is manifested only in the revelation of the Word of God. The Word of God is addressed to man not as a command to the creature or sinner but as a word of father to child. When the word of God is heard by man, the future reality of man becomes real and comes to him as future truth in

⁵¹⁰ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 466.

⁵¹¹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 458.

⁵¹² Barth, *Ethics*, p. 466.

the present. Man becomes a child of God as he hears the Word of the Father by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Man as he is in the contexts of both Creation and Reconciliation is not in himself a child of God. However, he receives the right to become a divine child when he believes in the Word of God spoken and revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. As John the Apostle testifies in John 1:12, “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God.” In the same manner, the Apostle Paul attests in Galatians 3:26, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” The eschatological reality of man as a divine child in the Son Jesus is not in the future. Paul does not say that man in faith *will* be a child of God but already *is* a child of God. The eschatological reality of man has not been fully manifested, but his awaiting future comes to him ceaselessly in believing Jesus the eternal Word of God.

The Word of God is the *locus* in which man participates in the divine nature. The Word of God establishes an indissoluble fellowship between God and man and man and God. The Word is the actual centre in space and time where God and man meet as one. Through the Revelation of the Word to him, man becomes a child of God and heir of God with Jesus the Son. It is through the grace of God that man can hear the Word that forms a true and real communion and fellowship of God to man. The Word of God addressed to man is no longer a frightening decree of the Lord or the unbearable law of an unapproachable righteous judge, but a loving Word of father to child.

By his Word, God confesses us across the great distance between Creator and creature and also across the abyss that separates the Holy One from sinners. By his Word, God gives us that participation in his own nature and makes us new creatures as children who belong to him, to whom he will be faithful as a father is to his children. This truth of his Word holds good even in face of the limits in which we exist on the basis of our creatureliness and in the conflict of grace and sin.⁵¹³

God comes to us and becomes man’s true loving Father by His Word that overcomes and eliminates the infinite qualitative distinction that prevents God the

⁵¹³ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 468.

Creator from being the Father of man the creature. In Jesus the Word of God, there is no separation but a unity between the Creator and the creature, the sinner and the Holy one. Man becomes a new being as a child of God who participates in God's own nature and eternal fellowship by the Word of God. Man receives a foretaste of the eschatological reality of man in the Word of God. Although divine sonship is the final and future reality of man, it is an eschatological truth that is no less real to man here and now who still exists in the limited human condition as creature and sinner. Believing the promise of the eschatological reality of man revealed in the Word is "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."⁵¹⁴ This faith in the Word is no less real than having the eschatological reality of the divine sonship in the *ἐσχατον*. The eschatological truth is truth as the future in the present. This truth is not in the future but comes to and is present as the future when man hopes for its manifestation in faith. The divine sonship of man is a coming reality of man as a new creature in the Word. In faith, man is what he shall be as a child of God. In the relation between God the Father and man as divine child, there is no more *diastasis* that separates one from the other. Man's future being is as a totally new being in Christ Jesus. Man receives eternal life by the Word of God and becomes a partaker of the divine nature which overcomes death.

Precisely where my future as a creature means death, and future as a sinner saved by grace could basically still mean only death, my future is that of a child of God whom death cannot accuse because in its Father, in him who is its Father by the Word, it has its Redeemer, the one who perfects its creaturely existence and frees it from bondage as a being that exists in the contradiction of sin and grace—and from this redeemer it has eternal life.⁵¹⁵

Man as a new creature in the Word of God is no longer threatened by death because his being as a child of God is protected in the Father by the Word. The promised eschatological being is a guaranteed eternal being. Man receives everlasting life as an heir of God and co-heir with Jesus the Son and has an eternal loving fellowship with God.

⁵¹⁴ Hebrews, 11:1. (NIV)

⁵¹⁵ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 468.

As the Apostle Paul testifies in Romans 8:17, “The Holy Spirit, the Redeemer, testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” Now, then, believers have to act and walk as heirs of God to be faithful to their divine calling, children of God, “not now our creaturely calling alone, nor our calling to be members of the people of God, but, as the point of these callings, our heavenly and eternal calling.”⁵¹⁶ Man’s being in terms only of creation or as forgiven sinner by the grace of God cannot do justice to his heavenly and eternal calling. Man has a future reality, as a partaker of the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4) who has eternal life. This future reality of man’s divine sonship extends to his present by the testimony and illumination of the Holy Spirit so that man has to look in faith beyond his limits in Creation and Reconciliation. He has to hold on to the eschatological truth revealed in the Word by the Holy Spirit that he discovers himself in the present as “one with God as a child is with his father.”⁵¹⁷

Moreover, God is no longer an unreachable lofty Creator or an unbearably holy Reconciler to man, but here and now, not in the future, God is his eternal Father. Man’s true way of being here and now is to live by the eschatological truth, in believing the Word of God that constantly reminds him of and brings about his true being. As man’s coming reality, the divine sonship solely rests on the Word of God: “Even if only in the present and obviously within the limits denoted by our sickness and frailty, man is now the new and future man of God.”⁵¹⁸ Within the contexts of Creation and Reconciliation, God and man are two contradictory kinds of beings; it is unthinkable to compare or intermingle God with man, or man with God. They are not comparable but remain as they are in the relation of God the Creator and man the creature. However, God becomes man’s Father and man His child in believing the revealed Word of God only with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Father to child relation revealed in the Word confirms the complementary nature of the relationship.

⁵¹⁶ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 469.

⁵¹⁷ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 499.

⁵¹⁸ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 500.

2. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Divine Action and the Divine Sonship of Man

At this point, we have a few critical questions in dealing with the divine sonship of man established in the Word of God, Jesus. Why does Barth make a clear distinction between man's status in Creation and Reconciliation and that in Redemption? Why is the divine sonship of man so significant to Barth in dealing with the theology of ethics? Does Barth advocate that the divine sonship of man makes him a supra-human being by losing his creatureliness? Does participation in the divine nature mean that man becomes a Godlike being? What is the significance of the nature of the relation between Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man to man in general? Can man identify himself with Jesus the Son? What would Barth's theological perspective be on these questions? From now on, I will delve into all the issues mentioned above to find appropriate answers.

First, Barth defines the divine sonship of man established in the Son of God as a union that is made in the *Holy Spirit*. This union would concretely manifest the nature of the relation of the Son of God to human nature. The *Holy Spirit* enables a creaturely man to unite with the nature of God.

The very possibility of human nature's being adopted into unity with the Son of God is the Holy Ghost....Through the Spirit flesh, human nature, is assumed into unity with the Son of God. Through the Spirit this Man can be God's Son and at the same time the second Adam and as such "the first born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29), the prototype of all who are set free for His sake and through faith in Him.⁵¹⁹

Through the Incarnation, Jesus the Second Person of the Trinity becomes the Son of Man like us. Jesus the Word of God becomes a human nature like us in all things, except sin.⁵²⁰ The humanization of God the Son opens up the way of uniting man with the divine Son. Jesus as "the Second Adam" and "the first born among many brethren" paves the way for man to become a divine child, like the Son Jesus. In the Old Testament, God and man were considered as fundamentally incompatible, and the contrast between the two different beings was stressed over

⁵¹⁹ Barth, C.D. I/2, p. 199.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Robert Victor Sellers, "The Documents of Chalcedon" in The Council of Chalcedon: a Historical and Doctrinal Survey, (London: S.P.C.K, 1953), p. 210-211.

and over again. However, the complete *diastasis* between God and man has been bridged in Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, who became the one and only locus where human nature can meet the divine nature and the two unite. The two contrasting natures as revealed in the Old Testament are no longer strictly incompatible, but co-referential and complementary in Jesus, the Second Adam. Then, what is the significant value that the unity of human nature's being with the Son of God brings to the relation of man to God? Moreover, what are the inner dynamics of the unity of man with the Son of God in the new framework of the New Testament? Would this unity of human nature with the Son of God bring about any transmutation of the inner dynamics of the communion of God with man?

In searching for any possible answers to the above questions, the initial step would be to look into the dynamics of the hypostatic union of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, where the two different natures (the divine nature and the human nature) are perichoretically unified. Through the hypostatic union of Jesus, God the Word has become incarnate and been made man as *creature*.⁵²¹ Here, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the two different natures (the divine nature and the human nature) have not changed into one synthesized nature that is neither truly God nor truly man. Rather, the two natures of Jesus are hypostatically united "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation"⁵²² as defined in the Chalcedonian Decree. Thus, the categories of God and man revealed in the Old Testament are retained, yet the relation of God and man has taken on new significance in the context of the Incarnation. In Jesus, the divine nature is allowed to assume the many experiences of human life, even birth and death. At the same time, human nature has the possibility of perfection, resurrection, and even deification. As confessed in the same decree, Jesus is "*homoousios* with the Father as to his Godhead, and the same *homoousios* with us

⁵²¹ Colossians 1:15; He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation.

⁵²² Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon: a Historical and Doctrinal Survey, p. 211. I quote the text from the "Chalcedonian creed" in the English translation by R. V. Sellers.

as to his manhood.”⁵²³ It is clear that the two different natures are distinguishable but inseparable in Jesus, the second Adam. If the two distinctive natures of Jesus were either indistinguishable or separable, Jesus would be neither truly God nor truly man, in contrast to the Confession of the early Church Fathers.

It is clear that the reciprocal action of the two natures of Jesus is co-inherent. For this reason, the above exposition of the hypostatic union of the two natures of Jesus through the Holy Spirit affirms that the reciprocal action of the divine and human natures of Jesus is perichoretic through the mutual interpenetration of both without changing or losing either nature. Consequently, the unity of the two natures of Jesus through the Holy Spirit constitutes a unique relationality between God and man. The Second Adam participates in the divine nature, preserving His own creaturely flesh at the same time. The two mutually exclusive natures are enabled to be perichoretically united and preserved in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, for the first time since the beginning of Creation. Jesus is *the first divine person* that has perichoretically united with the human nature. And also, Jesus is *the first human person* who has perichoretically united with the divine nature. A perichoretic relation of man to God is possible in Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit. This Jesus, the true God and true Man, is “the prototype of all who are set free for His sake and through faith in Him.”⁵²⁴

Then, could human beings be identified with the Man Jesus who is perichoretically related with God? What would Barth’s belief be on this point? First, it is essential to look into Barth’s own view on the dynamics of the unity of the human race with Jesus the Christ, which is manifested in the following manner:

He has to become our own. He has to dwell in us, *nostrum fieri et in nobis habitare*: in us, in the sense in which Eph. 4:15 tells us that He is our head, Rom. 8:29 that He is the first born among many brethren, Rom. 11:17 that we on our side are grafted into Him like a shoot into a tree, and Gal. 3:27 that we put Him on as a man puts on a garment. *Communicatio* of grace is *communicatio* of Christ Himself. It consists, therefore in this, that He and

⁵²³ Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: a Historical and Doctrinal Survey*, p. 210. I quote the text from the “Chalcedonian creed” in the English translation by R. V. Sellers.

⁵²⁴ Barth, C.D. I/2, p. 199.

we are no longer two but one, i.e., that we *cum ipso in unum coalescimus*.⁵²⁵

In the light of Barth's *analogia relationis*, Jesus is no one else but our own self; there is no separation between Jesus and His believers. Thus, the relation of Jesus to His believers is analogously manifested as a head to their whole body. Any type of *diastasis* between Jesus and His believers would be the same as the separation of a head from its body. This analogy of oneness of body reveals the indissoluble and irreversible connection of Jesus Himself to His believers. He dwells in them, so thus they do in Him. This type of union and connection of Jesus and man is possible only through "the Holy Spirit, the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), by which Christ has bound us to Himself and united us to Himself, just as already and on high He is *vinculum pacis* in which the Father and the Son are united."⁵²⁶ At this point, it is certain that the nature of the union of Jesus and His believers is analogous to and a copy of the union of God the Father and God the Son in the Holy Spirit. Through the *Holy Spirit*, Jesus and man are united in the same manner the Father is united with the Son. Through the *Holy Spirit*, man as a new creature can participate and dwells in the nature of God without changing or losing his creaturely nature that is renewed in Him.

Man's creaturely nature is no longer a stumbling block to having a perichoretic relationship with God because man's participation in the divine nature makes him identify himself with Jesus. This view is initially manifested in one of Barth's early writings, The Epistle to the Romans: "In naming myself *son* of God, I mean precisely what is meant when Christ is so named (viii.3)."⁵²⁷ In the same place, in dealing with man's freedom in God, Barth argues that man does not remain in slavery in so far as he is "identified with the new man in Christ, 'very man and very God.'"⁵²⁸ Moreover, this point is clearly reconfirmed by Barth in his later writings, the Church Dogmatics.

It is a piece with this that the solidarity with which Jesus binds Himself to His fellows is wholly real. There is not in Him a kind of deep, inner,

⁵²⁵ Barth, C.D. I/2, p. 241.

⁵²⁶ Barth, C.D. I/2, p. 241.

⁵²⁷ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 296.

⁵²⁸ Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 296.

secret recess in which He is alone in Himself or with God, existing in stoical calm or mystic rapture apart from His fellows, untouched by their state or fate. He has no such place of rest. He is immediately and directly affected by the existence of His fellows.⁵²⁹

The solidarity of Jesus with His believers is also affirmed in John 20:17; “I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” The very Father of Jesus is the same Father to His believers, and the very God of Jesus is the same God to His believers. Jesus and His believers have the same Father and God to whom they are the same children. Eventually, this leads us to think that the Father-children relationship between God and the Christian is comparable with the Father-Child relationship between God and the Son Jesus. According to Barth, God’s intention of sending His one and only Son is to impart the divine sonship to human beings in Him by the Holy Spirit.⁵³⁰ Man receives and finds his divine sonship in Jesus through the *Holy Spirit* who testifies his sonship in his *spirit*. Jesus has adopted His believers by sending His Spirit into man’s heart. Man becomes a divine child by receiving the *Holy Spirit*.⁵³¹

Now, adoption means the redemption of the body, that is, the completed identification between Christ and me.... It is not some other man that is redeemed, but I myself; not a fragment of me, but I in my totality. I am transformed, renewed, purified, made a participator of the divine nature and of the divine life, with God, by His side, and in Him.⁵³²

“At all events, in receiving the Holy Ghost he is what in himself and of himself he cannot be, one who belongs to God as a child to its father, one who knows God as a child knows its father, one for whom God is there as a father is there for his child.”⁵³³ The divine sonship of man is not his own nature. Rather, it is solely dependent on and valid within the prototype of his sonship, the Sonship of Jesus the Christ. The adoption of man as a divine child has occurred exclusively in believing in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. In this adoption, man is identified with the Son Jesus and becomes a child of God.

⁵²⁹ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 211.

⁵³⁰ Barth, C.L, p. 76.

⁵³¹ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 488.

⁵³² Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 312-313.

⁵³³ Barth, C.D. I/1, p. 457.

Obedience in the Light of *Analogia actionis*

The second mode of the Christian attitude that follows the pattern of περιχώρησις is obedience, that manifests its unique dynamic characteristics, in relation to the other two modes, in reality through human action. It requires the Christian's own subjective and concrete *action* that is nothing but the Christian mode of *existence* in the light of Barth's definition of analogy.⁵³⁴ Obedience cannot be and is not merely an independent human activity.⁵³⁵ Certainly, it is a human activity. However, it is inseparably united with divine action *in the vertical dimension* and perichoretically related with the other two modes of the Christian attitude, faith and prayer, *in the horizontal dimension*.⁵³⁶ The divine action that is inseparably united with obedience is the Word of God that is the source and centre of its reality. Basically, obedience is nothing else but "the *doing* of the Word of God."⁵³⁷ Jesus Christ as The Word of God is the living source that gives obedience as human action true meaning and validity as it is in relation to the other two modes of the Christian attitude. As James writes in James 2:17, "Faith without action is dead." Obedience proves man's faith in the Word living and active by manifesting his faith in existential action in daily life. Even though faith and obedience are inseparably united, the role of each mode is quite different from the other. For instance, faith *makes* man who he is in Christ with respect to the *analogia fidei*, but obedience *confirms* who he is as the creature in Him in the light of *analogia actionis*. By way of executing the Word of God in life, the Christian meets God as his Father and joins in his Father's business and lordship as a co-worker through grace. As Barth claims,

In believing, a man *becomes* a Christian; in obeying, he *is* a Christian. In doing what he has to do as a man who in Jesus Christ has come to know

⁵³⁴ Cf. Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 66. In *Analogie Entis oder Fidei? Die Frage der Analogie bei Karl Barth*, Horst G. Pöhlmann also describes Barth's analogy of faith as an analogy of action in his meticulous research into the dispute over *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*. Also see, Gunton's *Becoming and Being*, p. 168. Also see, Barth, Karl. "Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5," p. 3.

⁵³⁵ Cf. Barth, C.D. IV/1, p. 7. In this context, Barth claims that "The divine being and life and act takes place with ours, as it is only as the divine takes place that ours takes place."

⁵³⁶ Cf. Barth, C.L., pp. 102-103; Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 246.

⁵³⁷ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 253. (Italics mine)

God as his Father and himself as a child of God, the Christian is the creature which not merely contemplates the work of the divine providence and lordship from without, but *co-operates* in it from within. What we have particularly to emphasise in this connection is that the Christian attitude to the divine work does not consist in looking at it, but in *co-operating* with it.⁵³⁸

It is the Word of God that confers true meaning on human action and reveals who the agent *is* as a man in relation with God and opens up the possibility of cooperating with the divine work that is sheer grace and literally “impossible possibility” to man on his own. Thus, divine action is not static or abstractive but *existential* and *eventful* to man. Man can now participate in divine action not as a passive spectator with little interest and nominal role but as an active co-subject and cooperator in Jesus Christ. Obeying the Word, thus, does not make man who he is in Jesus, but *confirms* who he is in Christ.

Obedience as a concrete and living human action in every day life characterises and gives full meaning to who a human being is in Christ. The Christian is not a mere creature, but he is also who he *is* as a divine child and partner and active cooperator in the divine work in Christ by obeying the Word in his life. In obeying the Word, man becomes what he is not in nature. He becomes a partner of the divine work and lordship. In obeying the Word, the God and Lord with whom he works becomes his true Father. He becomes what he is not, a child of God, in Jesus Christ, by cooperating in the divine work and lordship. However, here Barth gives clear insight into the fact that the obedience of man in Christ is not “an achievement” in any sense that justifies and validates his own actions as meritorious deeds before God.⁵³⁹ In contrast, obeying the Word as human *subjective* action is an event of cooperation in the divine work and lordship over the universe that happens not “from without” but “from within” the abundant grace of God; obeying the Word as human subjective action is unthinkable without this divine grace bestowed unto us in Jesus Christ, yet still obedience is valid and respected as a human subjective action.

⁵³⁸ Barth, C.D. III/3, pp. 253-254. (Italics mine)

⁵³⁹ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 254.

Obedience as human action is clearly differentiated from divine action in freedom. Obedience does not lose its human *subjective* characteristic in relation to divine action, but it is recognized as it is with its clear distinctions and characteristics in relation to divine action in freedom. Even though it is inseparably related to the Word of God, obedience is not made mandatory or dominated by the divine command. Rather, obedience as human action is respected and valid as solely man's own responsibility. Although man's decision in obedience to the divine command is differentiated from "the divine decision" it is only "subject to the divine decision."⁵⁴⁰ For instance, Barth clearly points out that there exists in freedom an indissoluble distinction between human action and divine action in dealing with the act of love in obedience to God:

It is not the work of the Holy Spirit to take from man his own proper activity, or to make it simply a function of His own over-powering control. Where He is present, there is no servitude but freedom... If it were merely identical with the flowing of the stream of divine love into human life, if our little love were a manifestation or particle of the love of God, it could not and would not be so weak and puny. But the work of the Holy Spirit consists in the liberation of man for his own act and therefore for the spontaneous human love whose littleness and frailty are his own responsibility and not that of the Holy Spirit. Christian love as a human act corresponds indeed to the love of God but is also to be distinguished from it. It is an act in which man is at work, not as God's puppet, but with his own heart and soul and strength, as an independent subject who encounters and replies to God and is responsible to Him as His partner.⁵⁴¹

It is clear that human action still depends on divine action; it is complementarily united with divine action that never becomes or dominates human action.

⁵⁴⁰ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 199.

⁵⁴¹ Barth, C.D. IV/2, pp. 785-786. With regard to Barth's understanding of the nature of *spontaneous* human action, Hunsinger's analysis of Barth's exposition on the double agency in *How to Read Karl Barth* is helpful for understanding the dynamics between divine action and human action as well as the nature of human action, which should not be misunderstood by interpreting in terms of determinism, indeterminism or dialectical identity. As he faithfully summarises Barth's point of view on the double agency, Hunsinger writes, "Indeterminism exalts the creature at the expense of God; determinism exalts God at the expense of the creature; and dialectical identity exalts the two at the expense of each other (insofar as the creature is divinized or God is humanized as the cost of systematic coordination)." *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 224. Barth also remarks on the definition of the nature of divine life in the following manner: "Yes, the Son prays to the Father, and the Father hears. But this is *the divine life*. When we pray, we participate in this through Christ." (Italics mine) In "Karl Barth's Table Talk", p. 58.

Conversely, human action never takes the place of divine action. These two actions are inseparably related and indissolubly united with each other. In human obedience to the Word, however, divine action marginally controls human action but not in the authoritarian sense; it never coerces or manipulates human action to obey and fulfil the will of God. The relation between divine action and human action is similar to the subordinational relation of the Son to the Father in the divine economic and soteriological involvement in time and space.⁵⁴²

Even though human decision in obedience “is subject to the divine decision”, the human subjective decision in obedience is not overruled by divine decision.⁵⁴³ Rather, the divine decision and human decision are *complementary* to each other in the relation. Obviously, both actions are exclusive to each other in nature and degree; one divine and the other human; one from above the other from below; one eternal and the other mortal. However, in the light of the logical relation between the two actions, neither of them is dispensable in the mode of obedience. Even though these are mutually exclusive to each other, the two actions are necessary constituents of the event of obedience. Barth develops and uses the notion of this complementary relation between divine action and human action when he deals with predestination as the eternal will of God in the election of Jesus Christ:

[T]here can be no question of limiting and conditioning the freedom of God in which this decision is made by the mystery of the existentiality of a complementary human decision. The relationship between God and man is constantly renewed and refashioned, but there can be no question of its having two sources—the one in God’s decision and the other in the corresponding decision of man to which God’s decision is itself related....The life of this relationship cannot, therefore, be one-sided. Even if God has a powerful advantage over man, it is still necessarily two-sided, and its mystery must be thought of as the mystery of the human decision as well as the divine.⁵⁴⁴

Consequently, both divine decision and human decision form a complementary relationship in which the two mutually exclusive and differentiated actions

⁵⁴² Cf. Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill; trans. by Ford L. Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 155. (Book I, Ch. XIII, 26)

⁵⁴³ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 199.

⁵⁴⁴ Barth, C.D. II/2, p. 193.

enhance or emphasise each other's qualities and form a unitary whole. The Word of God has been given to man as the divine command that summons man. Man has received the free will to follow the Word of God and fulfil the divine will according to his own decision. However, neither action can control or manipulate the other.

Barth gives further explication of the nature of the complementary unity between divine command and human obedience when he deals with the fellowship of Christ with Christians. The terms "attachment", "co-ordination", or "conjunction" do not adequately define the nature of the union between Christ and Christians in their fellowship. According to Barth, union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*) does not mean "dissolution" of the two subjects, and it does not mean a "conjunction of the two in which one or the other, and perhaps both, lose their specific character, role and function in relation to the other."⁵⁴⁵ This union occurs when man becomes a Christian in faith; his faith becomes real by his obedience to the Word. Thus, man meets and is united with Christ in faith that is confirmed by his action of obedience. However, the union does not mean a mere "mixture," or "conjunction" of the two separated parts that may either leave both sides as they were before the "mixture," or "conjunction," or merge one into the other side by destroying or delimiting its unique characteristics and identity.

The union of the Christian with Christ which makes man a Christian is their conjunction in which each has his own independence, uniqueness and activity. In this way it is, of course, their true, total and indissoluble union: true not ideal; total not merely psychical and intellectual; indissoluble and not just transitory.⁵⁴⁶

Barth's definition of the union of Christ with Christians in faith reveals the pattern of the Christmas miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ. Moreover, it follows the pattern of the Chalcedonian definition of Christology, "the indissoluble differentiation," "the inseparable unity" between His divinity and humanity.⁵⁴⁷ In the light of the pattern of Chalcedonian Christology, then, the union of Christ with the Christian is not like a tumbled mixture of two exclusive elements, such as salt

⁵⁴⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 540.

⁵⁴⁶ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 540.

⁵⁴⁷ Barth, C.D. III/2, p. 437.

and sand, in a box. It is not like a synthesis of two different materials in which the two different things are transformed into a totally new substance. Rather, the union of Christians with Christ means “a single totality,” and “a fluid and differentiated but genuine and solid unity.”⁵⁴⁸ The nature of the fellowship between the two parts in the union is never static or coercive but always fluid and reciprocal; one gives, and the other receives; one requests, and the other answers; one speaks, and the other listens; one commands, and the other obeys. As Barth contends, the relationship of divine action and human action “would not be complete if their relationship were actualised only from above downwards and not also from below upwards, if it were not *reciprocal*.”⁵⁴⁹

However, there is an indestructible order within the reciprocity between the Christian and Christ. In this reciprocity, both sides can be considered as two distinct poles that are inseparably united as “a single totality.”⁵⁵⁰ As Barth claims, “There is no question of any merging or any confusion,” but “neither can there be any question of any abstraction or separation” that eventually confirms the “indissoluble unity” between the two different poles in this union.⁵⁵¹ The “indissoluble unity” between Christ and the Christian confirms a bipolar unity within the union. In this bipolar unity between the two poles, the indestructible order excludes any idea of symmetrical equality on the same level. In other words, the reciprocity in the fellowship takes the form of an asymmetrically differentiated bipolar unity. Thus, the fellowship of the Christian with Christ occurs in an asymmetrically differentiated bipolar unity because Christ is the centre of the fellowship and He is “logically prior to” the Christian.⁵⁵²

That God is Lord of the covenant of grace is materially the first thing by which his being and work, and therefore his speaking and commanding, as Creator and Redeemer are also determined and stamped. And that man moves from and to him as Lord of the covenant of grace is what

⁵⁴⁸ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 540.

⁵⁴⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 543. (Italics mine)

⁵⁵⁰ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 540.

⁵⁵¹ Barth, *Christ and Adam*, p. 41.

⁵⁵² Cf. Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger gives lucid insight into the conceptual priority of theology over psychology by referring to the characteristics of the Chalcedonian pattern in her *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 66-67.

characterises (positively and negatively) man's being and action as also the creature and the future heir of God, not the reverse.⁵⁵³

God initiates and man responds; He gives and man receives; He summons and man is called; He reveals, man believes; He commands, and man obeys. Jesus Christ is truly "the noetic and ontic basis" of the fellowship of the union.⁵⁵⁴ Hence, the relationship between divine subjective decision and human subjective decision consists in an asymmetrically differentiated bipolar unity on the basis of divinely conferred grace.

He believes, obeys and confesses as, now that Christ has united Himself with him, he unites himself with Christ, giving himself to the One who first gave Himself to him, and thus choosing Him as the starting-point and therefore the goal of His thinking, speech, volition and action, quite simply and non-paradoxically because this is what He is, because there is no other starting-point or goal apart from Him, because in truth he is not outside Him but within Him.⁵⁵⁵

Literally, Jesus is the departure and the destination of all Christian activities in obedience. Jesus Christ has shown us what true obedience really is. Sent by God the Father, Jesus the Son has fulfilled the Father's will completely as the obedient Son. Jesus obeys His Father simply because He is the Son of God the Father. His complete obedience confirms His true Sonship to the Father. As Barth puts it, the obedience of the Son of God is "the great pattern of Christian obedience."⁵⁵⁶ By following this pattern, man becomes a child of God and confirms his divine sonship in the Son of God, Jesus. If one is truly a child of God, he will follow "the great pattern" shown by Jesus by obeying the will of God as Jesus Christ has done. As Barth summarises, "If we are to understand the nature of this union, then, in relation to the emphasised independence, uniqueness and activity of Jesus Christ on the one side and the Christian on the other, we do well to begin, not below with the Christian, but above with Jesus Christ as the Subject who initiates and acts decisively in this union."⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵³ Barth, C.L., p. 9.

⁵⁵⁴ Barth, C.L., p. 9.

⁵⁵⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 544.

⁵⁵⁶ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 254.

⁵⁵⁷ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 541.

In obedience to God's command, man listens and follows His command out of his own choice and willingness. God does not force or manipulate man to choose and obey His command. Rather, God wants him to do it with his own will in freedom. This freedom does not mean in any sense a freedom of choice with various options but freedom to obey the divine will. It does not mean man is not under the command of God any more but that man stands "under the command", that man himself "affirms" that he obeys the divine command with his own will.⁵⁵⁸ Based on this presupposition, Barth differentiates between a true and a false freedom and gives lucid insight into what true freedom of man is in relation to divine action.

True freedom is not a choice between alternatives; *our one freedom is obedience to the will of God*. What we call freedom as 'free will' is not freedom. *We are free if we agree with God*, otherwise we are prisoners....The liberty of free will is sin! It is the shame of humanity that we live as if we could choose.⁵⁵⁹

Thus, Barth's definition of the true freedom of man is to be in agreement with the will of God. Man is not free *from* but *for* God. In other words, man is not free without the Word of God. If man lives without knowing and obeying the will of God, he is like one of the Israelites during the time of Judges; at the time, as Israel had no king, each person did "that which was right in his own eyes."⁵⁶⁰

In obeying the Word of God, human decision with divinely given freedom to obey the Word of God is inseparably united with the divine decision. However, neither decision should be ignored or overruled by the other. Rather, each decision recognizes and honours the other in the relationship. Human action is always related and united with divine action in the free will to obey His command. In relation to obedience to the divine Word, man does not have or practise a freedom of choice "at the cross road." Rather, he has a freedom to obey the will

⁵⁵⁸ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 502.

⁵⁵⁹ Barth, "Karl Barth's Table Talk", p. 99. (Italics mine)

⁵⁶⁰ Judges 21: 25. (NIV)

of God that is the one and the real freedom given to him. Otherwise, it is a false freedom that deceives man and leads him far from his Creator.⁵⁶¹

We come to speak about the action itself as a fulfilment of the command, the decisive Word of God cannot be anticipated, and no determining or determination of human conduct can be shown in which we can grasp its goodness or badness *in abstraction from the divine decision*, in which we can think of it as put in our own hands, so that just before the door is closed we are given again the dignity of Hercules at the crossroads, of freedom of choice. God forbid! We may not and shall not evade this question of the action in itself and as such.⁵⁶²

However, man's freedom in obedience to the will of God is man's autonomous freedom because, in the event of obedience, there is no "legalistic or casuistic" action that would "violate the freedom of God and the freedom of man."⁵⁶³ Barth does not deny the superior power and authority of God over the universe, not to mention over human nature. However, he insists that God does not practise His power and authority in an authoritarian manner over human action and freedom. God does not practise "a blind, brute power working casually and mechanically," nor does He "force or disable" human freedom with His omnipotent power.⁵⁶⁴ In contrast, God allows man to obey His Word in his own freedom and on his own responsibility.⁵⁶⁵ In this sense, Barth eliminates any idea of a cause and effect mechanism in the relation of human action to divine action. Obedience as fully human action cannot be forced by divine action. Moreover, it cannot be thought of as a product of the divine command. Man's obedience to the will of God is truly the human response to the divine command, but it cannot be thought of as a determined action of man in relation to the divine will. In the event of obedience, both divine action and human action exist and are recognized

⁵⁶¹ According to Barth's own definition in "Karl Barth's Table Talk" (p. 99), freedom can be thought of only in relation to obeying the will of God.

⁵⁶² Barth, *Ethics*, p. 248. (Italics mine.) Freedom, here, does not mean in any sense a political idea of freedom, as one might think. Barth explicates his use of freedom in the Christian sense in the following manner: "The decisive point is whether freedom in the Christian sense is identical with the freedom of Hercules: choice between two ways at a crossroad. This is a heathen notion of freedom. Is it freedom to decide for the devil? The only freedom that means something is the freedom to be myself as I am created by God. God did not create a neutral creature, but *His* creature." In "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 37.

⁵⁶³ Barth, C.L., pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶⁴ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 528.

⁵⁶⁵ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 544.

in the manner of a complementary relation; the event of obedience is possible and actual only when both actions exist together with mutual recognition.⁵⁶⁶

Then, who is this man who can listen and obey the command of God in his own free responsibility and decision in relation with divine action? Who is this man who acts with God in the manner of a complementary relation in which both God and man mutually recognize and honour each other's freedom in the actual event of obedience? With regard to this matter, Barth reminds us of the necessity of the eschatological reality of man in the relation of divine action to human action. Obedience to the will of God, according to Barth, becomes true *free* human action only when man listens and obeys the Word not as "that of the creature or the sinner saved by grace" but as a liberated or freed child of God who encounters and obeys the divine Word from the standpoint of his eschatological reality, in his divine sonship.⁵⁶⁷ Obedience to the will of God is an "impossible possibility" to the sinner saved by grace. Man who obeys the will of God is more than a sinner saved by grace. He is newly generated in the Word by the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God who obeys the will of God as the Son Jesus obeys His Father. Thus, man's obedience to the will of God affirms his divine sonship in Jesus Christ. Moreover, he is now "God's partner, on and with whom God is at work."⁵⁶⁸ Hence, his action in relation to divine action is always valid as "the venture of a free decision and leap."⁵⁶⁹

The freedom of the children of God is indeed the gift of God that transforms the quality and value of man's action in response to divine action. In the context of the divine command and human obedience, the freedom of man operates as an indispensable factor that changes the relation from static and mandatory to fluid and voluntary in nature.⁵⁷⁰ Moreover, in the context of the

⁵⁶⁶ At this point, we have to keep in mind the falsity of a dialectical identity as Barth warns. Divine action is clearly differentiated from human action; Barth does not identify human action with divine action or divine action with human action. Rather, both actions that are found in a single phenomenon are distinguished but inseparable from each other.

⁵⁶⁷ Barth, *Ethics*, p. 501.

⁵⁶⁸ Barth, C.L., p. 7.

⁵⁶⁹ Barth, C.D. IV/3, p. 544.

⁵⁷⁰ Barth makes a clear separation between a law and the divine command. Man obeys the command of God out of respect for who God is to him. Man obeys the command as His Father's Word, not as a law upheld through punishment. "Karl Barth's Table Talk," p. 89.

father-child relationship, the free gift of divine grace and the voluntary human response emerge and unite as “*real reality*” that brings about both a “noetic” and an “ontic” change of man.⁵⁷¹

In obedience as we have described it faith is necessarily included. We have seen already that the work of God to man and man’s own work faith is translated into an event, an action, a real human existence, only in virtue of the fact that it contains within it obedience, that faith itself is at root an act of obedience. It is only too true that while faith alone is the basis of the Christian’s standing, yet without works, without its translation in obedience into an event or action, it would be dead.⁵⁷²

Consequently, man as a divine child must look beyond himself in Jesus Christ and cling to God Himself so that he can be continually freed to obey the will of God as His own child in Jesus through the Holy Spirit with the knowledge of who he is in Jesus Christ.

Prayer in the Light of *Analogia Relationis*

Prayer is the most significant element of the Christian attitude following the pattern of the perichoretic union of the Trinity manifested in the economic and soteriological divine involvement in time and space. According to Barth, prayer is “the most intimate and effective form of Christian action.”⁵⁷³ According to Barth, the invocation of God by the Christian reveals most vividly the nature of the union between the divinity and humanity. Moreover as Henri Bouillard and Philip Rosato suggest, the main theological interest of Barth from his early work was not confined to the Church or the sacraments *per se* but predominantly in the

⁵⁷¹ Barth has two kinds of reality of man; one in sin and the other without sin; one as quasi-reality and the other as true reality. Apart from Jesus who is the one and only real man, man “exists” in the biological sense but “lacks reality” in the spiritual sense. “Man in sin exists, but is not ‘real reality.’” “Karl Barth’s Table Talk”, p. 15. Man becomes *real reality* only when he has faith in and obeys the Word that brings about both a *noetic* and *ontological* transformation in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Barth also contends the idea of “ontological difference” within “a common ontological basis” for all human beings in the same text, p. 91. Through the saving and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ, all men are entitled to participate in this common ontological ground. However, there is clear distinction and separation within the ground between those who “know (noetic)” and those who do not. As Barth insists, “This *knowledge* is *reality*, so that the baptised man does undergo an ontological (noetic) change within the once-for-all ontological condition created for all men by Jesus Christ.” Ibid. p. 91. (Italics mine)

⁵⁷² Barth, C.D.III/3, p. 262.

⁵⁷³ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 264.

relational unity between divine agency and human agency in the Church and the sacraments.⁵⁷⁴ As we have dealt with the doctrine of Redemption regarding Barth's moral theology, the analogical use of the perichoretic relationship between divine action and human action provides the major framework of Barth's theology of ethics.

As T.F. Torrance points out, Barth's purpose in emphasizing the infinite hiatus between God and man in his dialectical thinking was to build a sound foundation of the divine-human relationship apart from naïve philosophical speculations.⁵⁷⁵ Once he had established this solid foundation, Barth worked on the intimate relational unity between divine agency and human agency in the ecclesiastical context. As the actualization of man's eschatological reality in time and space, prayer is considered the most significant element.⁵⁷⁶ The nature of the relationship between the Father and His children manifested in the prayer of children of God in Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of Salvation and the ultimate goal of one's life. For this reason, prayer as a Christian attitude is the existential and ontological actualization of the eschatological reality of man in time and space. It may not be fully manifested yet but is already a real and true and ongoing event, oriented toward the future.

The Christian attitude of prayer is the mode of being in Christ which represents the eschatological reality of the Christian. It manifests the all-embracing relation of the Christian as a child to God as the Father that is an impossible possibility within the bounds of human reality as a creature and as a sinner saved by grace.⁵⁷⁷ As Barth repeatedly points out, God's will toward human beings does not end with the fact that God created them and reconciled the sinful to Him in Jesus Christ but with their redemption in the Holy Spirit as divine children to whom God becomes the eternal Father. As Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray by defining to whom they are praying, that God is the Father to whom

⁵⁷⁴ Bouillard, *Karl Barth I*, p. 20-21. Also see J. Philip Rosato's *The Spirit as Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), pp. 60-64.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. T.F. Torrance, *Karl Barth*, p. 89.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Barth, *Ethics*, p. 472.

⁵⁷⁷ Cf. Barth, *Ethics*, p. 473.

they pray differentiates Christian prayer from any other prayer.⁵⁷⁸ The most significant aspect of the Lord's Prayer reveals who the Christian is *in relation with* God. In the invocation of God by man, a unique form of communication between God and man occurs in the form of an I-Thou relation. This I-Thou relationship indicates the analogous definition of an *imago Dei* manifested in the form of the *analogia relationis* between God and man that is analogous to the perichoretic inner Being of God. The word, god, could mean many things in different contexts. However, in the light of the I-Thou relationship, calling God *Father* gives special meaning to Christians. As Barth points out in the light of New Testament epistles, "θεὸς πατήρ" is often used for the purpose of stressing the unique Christian qualification of the word God in contrast to other religious gods.⁵⁷⁹ For this reason, θεὸς πατήρ defines who we are in relation to Him. We are His children along with His Son Jesus. Prayer is no longer a religious ritual offered to a god who is utterly remote and unapproachable. With reference to the *analogia relationis*, I will discuss Barth's trinitarian understanding of prayer as the Christian attitude in relation to divine action and human action.

According to Barth's definition of the Christian attitude by reference to a trinitarian analogy, prayer is faith, and prayer is also obedience.⁵⁸⁰ Yet, Barth clearly makes an indissoluble distinction between the three forms of the Christian attitude. Prayer is distinctive from faith and obedience. However, prayer as a form of the Christian attitude is unthinkable apart from faith and obedience. In this respect, the relationship between the three forms of the Christian attitude is analogous to the trinitarian Being of God, as each form of the Christian attitude includes the other two within it yet remains indissolubly distinctive from the others.⁵⁸¹ One of the distinctive features of prayer is that it is simply asking.⁵⁸² In other words, it is human action that initiates the relationship with God. The direction of the communication is from man to God; man requests, and God

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. Barth, C.L., p. 50.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Barth, C.L., pp. 54, 55.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 265.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 266.

⁵⁸² Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 268.

listens and answers. In the context of faith, divine revelation first comes to man, and then man responds to it; divine action initiates and human action follows. In the context of obedience, human action is followed by *a prior* divine command; human action is still responsive to divine action.

However, prayer as human action is logically prior to divine action. For this reason, prayer is unique as an initiating human action in relation to divine action. Yet, the logical priority of human action in the divine-human relation is unthinkable apart from divine action. Prayer as well as faith and obedience as human action are inseparably related to divine action in the divine-human relationship. When we talk about human action, it is always necessary to deal with divine action. In the context of prayer, we can measure the status of the human subject in relation with God. Even though man cannot snatch away any part of God, God Himself gives man all that is His. On the basis of the Apostle Paul's remark in Romans 8:32 ("He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up freely for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"), Barth claims that the Christian is able to take things from the divine hand because God even gives him or her Himself and all that He possesses.⁵⁸³ God wants to give us all the things we request according to His good will. Whatever we pray for or request, God listens and answers our prayer. However, just as a prodigal son stands up and returns to the bosom of his father who is waiting for him with patience, it is not the almighty God who can make us pray, but we who ought to pray voluntarily to Him. Our free, subjective action that is differentiated from divine subjective action is absolutely required when we pray to God.

Prayer as human initiative in the relation of God and man is very special in comparison to the other two forms of the Christian attitude. That is why Barth defines prayer as *the subjective human factor* that forms the whole Christian existence in the midst of divine grace.⁵⁸⁴ In the context of Creation and Reconciliation, it is not subjective human action that is significant but the

⁵⁸³ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 269.

⁵⁸⁴ Barth, C.L., p. 102.

sovereign power of God. However, in the context of Redemption, man as divine child along with the Son Jesus Christ is genuinely accepted by God and allowed to approach Him. Barth gives us more detailed insight into the subjective human action in relation to divinely subjective action in the following manner:

We remember that it is due only to the free grace of God that there can be dealings with God at all, so there can be the special dealings between God and these men, the history of their encounter, the concrete intercourse and exchange between them, a living relation in which not only God acts but these specific people may and should be *truly active* as well...God purges himself from the base suspicion that he is an unchangeable, untouchable, and immutable deity whose divine nature condemns him to be the only one at work. By God's free grace these people are not *marionettes* who move only at His will. They are given *the status of subjects* who are able and willing to act, able and willing to do what is appropriate to them in dealing with Him, able and willing to call upon Him as the Father of Jesus Christ and therefore as their Father and also as the Father of all men.⁵⁸⁵

The Reconciliation of God with sinful man through Jesus is eventually achieved through God's free grace. In Creation and Reconciliation, man does not contribute anything; rather, he is the sole beneficiary. However, we cannot ignore the presence and value of the free will and subjective act of man in relation to divine action. Surely, his free response and act are possible under the umbrella of God's freely given grace, which is the ground of everything that was and is and will be. Barth helps us to gain a more articulated understanding of the validity of the subjective human action that plays on this vast ground of divine grace. We believe that all things are possible by the all-encompassing grace of God. Yet, Barth points out that we should not fail to notice the subjective free act of man that also plays an integral part in the *bipolar relational reality in tension* between divine action and human action. As Barth says, we Christians are not unresponsive "marionettes" solely manipulated by the divine hand; rather we Christians are liberated for "free, spontaneous and responsible cooperation in this history."⁵⁸⁶ In other words, God is the very One who wants and accepts our subjective action in relation to divine action in time and space as His Son Jesus did. No matter what happens, prayer is human subjective action distinct from

⁵⁸⁵ Barth, C.L., p. 102. (Italics mine)

divine subjective response, yet both actions are inseparable from each other in the divine-human relationship that is analogous to the perichoretic relationship among the Three Persons of God.

Prayer is a special form of the Christian attitude because the invocation of God by His children really calls and presses upon the will of God to be done.⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, as Barth contends, this will of God is done as “God participates in the creature, and enables it to participate in Himself, and in the purpose and direction of His works.”⁵⁸⁸ Even though prayer is subjective human action, it should be geared toward fulfilling the divine will and works. As a co-heir with the Son Jesus, man can participate in divine work through prayer which is nothing but “a real co-operation” in the Father’s business. In prayer, human action is transformed into divine action. Yet, in this transformation, neither side dominates or prevails over against the other. Rather, each action is complementary to the other; neither action is to work without immediately thinking of the other. Each action requires the other to be valid because God wants to be with man and to act with man from eternity.⁵⁸⁹ God decided not to be without man in Jesus Christ. In other words, man cannot be who he *is* without God. In the light of Barth’s complementary dialectic in relation to Kierkegaard’s qualitative dialectic, prayer is the locus where God and man *unite* in the binding band of love in the Holy Spirit who forms a living fellowship with man and his spirit as He does between the Father and the Son.⁵⁹⁰

In describing this complementary unity between divine action and human action, Barth posits an asymmetrical bipolar unity between divine action and human action that is analogous to the revealed relationship between God the Father and the Son Jesus in their economic and soteriological involvement in time and space; the subordination of the Son to the Father, not with respect to eternal essence but to the economic order. First, Barth draws a distinction between the divinely subjective element and the humanly subjective element in dealing with

⁵⁸⁶ Barth, C.L., p. 102.

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 286.

⁵⁸⁸ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 286.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. Barth, C.D. III/4, pp. 107-108.

the bipolar unity. In the light of the *analogia relationis*, Barth emphasises the nature of the bipolar *unity* between the divinely subjective element and the humanly subjective element. According to Barth, “[T]he invocation of God as their Father, as a free and responsible human action, belongs inseparably, as a kind of lower pole, to the objective, more accurately, the divinely subjective element.”⁵⁹¹ Prayer as human action is free and subjective in nature and at the same time forms a “lower pole” in relation to the divinely subjective element.

On the other hand, the divinely subjective element forms an “upper pole” in the bipolar unity with the humanly subjective element. Moreover, as Barth explicitly claims, this divinely subjective element as an upper pole in the unity is “indissolubly related and united” with the humanly subjective element.⁵⁹² In another place, with regard to prayer, Barth also explicates the indissoluble bipolar relational unity between divine action and human action by saying that “[I]n Christ, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and therefore in fellowship with Him, the praying man is not separated from God nor God from him. Rather, in Jesus Christ man is from eternity bound up with God, and God from eternity with man.”⁵⁹³

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. Barth, C.L., p. 90.

⁵⁹¹ Barth, C.L., p. 102.

⁵⁹² Barth, C.L., p. 102.

⁵⁹³ Barth, C.D. III/4, pp. 107-108.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to examine Barth's analogical use of the pattern of περιχώρησις in his theology of ethics in the ecclesiastical context, with special attention to the possibility of an analogical relation between the trinitarian inner divine communion and the divine-human communion. At the beginning of the research, I dealt with Barth's comprehensive understanding of analogy as an initial approach to his theology of diastasis. In dealing with the ongoing dispute between *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei*, Barth recognizes the necessity of "the complementary concept of analogy" and, in contrast, admits the lack of balance of his *analogia fidei* on the exclusive ground of the eternal diastasis between God and man by noting, "The allegation that we were teaching that God is everything and man nothing, was bad." And Barth continues, he was wrong to see the "‘wholly other’ in isolation, abstracted and absolutized, and set it over against man."⁵⁹⁴ By recognizing the shortcomings of the famous terms that represent Barth's view of the God-man relationship, such as "wholly other", "perpendicularly from above", and "infinite qualitative distinction".⁵⁹⁵

Barth himself recognizes the necessity of changing direction from his previous view, not in *opposition* to but none the less in *distinction* from an earlier perspective.⁵⁹⁶ Barth does not here discard his *analogia fidei* in favour of the *analogia entis*, but he claims he was wrong exactly where he was right.⁵⁹⁷ He maintains his *analogia fidei* as valid as it is. However, he now discovers the other dimension of analogy in the knowability of God that other, Roman Catholic, theologians have grasped long before. Barth's *analogia fidei* is only the other side of the *analogia entis*; the *analogia fidei* is not antithetical but complementary to the *analogia entis*. It is certain that Balthasar's affirmation of the complementary

⁵⁹⁴ Barth, *Humanity of God*, pp. 44, 45.

⁵⁹⁵ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 42.

⁵⁹⁶ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 37.

⁵⁹⁷ Barth, *Humanity of God*, p. 44.

concept of analogy, “*analogia entis* within *analogia fidei*,”⁵⁹⁸ has sufficiently convinced Karl Barth himself. Conversely, then, as these two ways of analogy are now no longer understood in opposition to but in distinction from each other, it should be possible to consider Barth’s own works written on the ground of the *analogia fidei* as implying the complementary aspects of the *analogia entis*.

The logic of the complementary natures of the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* is more convincingly manifested in the complementary dialectics of Kierkegaard and Barth, in which eternity and time, the infinite and the finite, and divinity and humanity as antithetical modalities are brought into a bipolar unity without diminishing their qualitative distinctions. Moreover, their radically differentiated polarities form a unique relationality in faith by transfiguring the two poles into a bipolar-relational unity. In particular, this complementary unity between divinity and humanity is achieved once-for-all in the Person of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ, humanity has been redefined and transformed forever; in faith, the singularity of the Person of Jesus as the particularity of the existing individual is no less real than any of the scientific claims of natural law.⁵⁹⁹ The paradoxical, hypostatic union of the Person of Jesus is beyond and above human reason. In believing the paradox, each believer must be involved both spiritually and existentially because for Kierkegaard faith is a self-involving “happy passion”, not merely a matter of verbal or intellectual assent.⁶⁰⁰ For both Kierkegaard and Barth, man’s bondage of self-dichotomizing despair is removed by choosing to *believe* the paradoxical

⁵⁹⁸ Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 382.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. Michael Polanyi, *Scientific Thought and Social Reality*, ed. by Fred Schwartz (New York: International University Press, 1974), p. 66. In his contention on the validity of personal commitment and belief in all areas of human knowledge, Polanyi comments in the following manner: “Science or scholarship can never be more than an affirmation of the things we believe in. The beliefs will be of their very nature, be of a normative character—that is to say, claiming universal validity—and they must be responsible beliefs, held in due consideration of the evidence and of the fallibility of all beliefs; but eventually they are ultimate commitments, issued under our personal judgement. To all further scruples we must at some point finally reply: For I believe so.”

⁶⁰⁰ Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3/3506, X A 777, n.d., 1851. Cf. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 300. In this text, Michael Polanyi gives a similar understanding of the nature of faith in the field of natural science as something that takes place within a *flow of passion* along with one’s *personal participation* in the knowledge.

revelation of Jesus Christ through His quickening power, the Holy Spirit, because Jesus Christ is the one and only nexus to the eternal for the existential. In *faith*, man can leap into the nexus that is open to him.

In view of Barth's exposition of Jesus Christ as the nexus to God for us, the true ordinance in the context of governing the Christian community is Jesus Christ; He is therefore superior to both the Church and her members. The rule and the first principle underlying all service of the Church is the living Word of God, which attests the Christ, Jesus. When one listens to His Word, Jesus Christ as true God reigns in the midst of the human, historical form of His body and dwells in the hearts of His people through His Spirit so that He rules their thoughts, words and deeds. The Church lives precisely in so far as God lives in Jesus Christ who is her Lord and permits and commands her to live nowhere else but in Him. Christians cannot think of themselves apart from Jesus Christ but in Him and in Him alone. The members of the Church through God's Spirit are united with Him in faith. The Spirit of Jesus Christ becomes the orientation or focus providing the principle of unity of the Church.

This relationship reflects a bipolar relationality between God and His people following the pattern of *περιχώρησις*. The members of the Church are united by its common origin in the crucified Son of God. Despite the differences in the temporal and historical situation of its members, they spiritually co-inhere and are complementary to each other under the guidance and lordship of Jesus Christ. The people of the community are sanctified through Jesus Christ who makes the ungodly righteous, through the election and commission of its Lord and Head. The members of the Church are unified and their actions coordinated by the higher level. The hierarchy in the Church is functional. The Spirit of God and of Jesus coordinates its unitary function. The body of Christ is controlled not by any type of human agent, but by the higher source, Jesus Christ through His Spirit. In the communion of the saints, people are essentially coequal and exist on the same plane. People are related hierarchically in the Church according to their divinely commissioned places. However, as long as that hierarchy is fluid and reciprocal, people are related as coequals. Only when the hierarchy petrifies and

the roles remain static is there a problem of unequal relations. A horizontal *περιχώρησις* occurs within human communion by which a “fluid” and “reciprocal” hierarchy generates a complementary egalitarianism in the human, historical form of the body of Jesus Christ.

The bipolar relational reality in tension between God and His people manifested in the Church follows the perichoretic pattern, as the two totally different subjects, the divine subjective element and the human subjective element, are united without confusion or loss of either element’s unique nature. This integration brings about the new mode of *being* in communion in the Church. Barth’s illustration of baptism with special attention to the divine-human communion shows the bipolar relational reality following the pattern of *περιχώρησις*. Barth’s discourse on baptism deals with three different forms, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of water and infant baptism. These three different types of baptism are related to one another. With regard to the divine change as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Barth affirms that it is the foundation of the new Christian life in which man practises his own freedom as subjective human action distinguished from divine action. Initially, the divinely wrought change, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, opens up the way to the new Christian mode of existence by calling man from ignorance to revelation and from unfaithfulness to faithfulness to God. In the freedom given in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, man exists as a newly generated and transformed being. Here, freedom is indispensable to man’s becoming a new being in the midst of sinful, depraved circumstances. In the divinely given freedom, he is liberated from his old sinful and depraved nature and transformed into an authentic, real person in communion with the Lord in the Holy Spirit. Through this divinely wrought change, his self-determining action becomes solely moral action even though it was initiated and made possible with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

The dynamic relation between the divinely wrought change and human response in freedom provides a key to understanding in Barth’s study of baptism with water. The divine change and human response in freedom are closely related to each other but clearly distinguished from each other. These two distinct actions

cannot be mingled or confused, but are integrated without losing their own unique characteristics; exclusively divine and exclusively moral. The perfect integration between the two actions makes the free, dynamic relationship between God and man possible. The baptism of the Spirit leads to the baptism of water. Baptism with water as human action is valid only in relation to baptism with the Holy Spirit, the divine change. By putting special emphasis on the nature of human action in relation to the divine change, Barth construes the baptism of water in the following way:

He does it as his own work. But he does it in obedience, as the first exemplary work of faith, of faithfulness to God, for which he is freed and awakened, and to which he is summoned, by the mighty demonstration of God's faithfulness to him...Christian baptism is the first form of the human decision which in the foundation of the Christian life corresponds to the divine change.⁶⁰¹

The Christian's request for the baptism of water is free moral action indeed, that is solely based on divine enlightenment through the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit, regardless of his work or demand, awakens a man to Christian faith by the word of God that is absolute divine action and grace toward man. However, unlike the baptism of the Spirit, man becomes the initiator of the baptism by his own self-determined request for the water baptism that the community of the Lord prepares and performs for him. Only after the divine change, he comes to the point of being able to request and decide on the ground of the given freedom. In virtue of his first free decision in baptism, he introduces himself to the community of the Lord and is recognized as a valid member and part of the community.

From the perspective of his firm exposition of the baptism of the Spirit and that of water, Barth strongly rejects the validity of infant baptism. For Barth, baptism is a human response to the divine grace occurring in the moment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This human action in reaction to the divine calling must be a self-determined decision in freedom. Only then, human action as the true expression of faith is effective in relation to divine action. The baptism of water is not a mere religious rite practised in accordance with the divine

⁶⁰¹ Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 43.

command, but it is the point of contact between God and man. In baptism, each individual stands before God as an authentic person and shares communal fellowship with Him as well as with other Christians. From that perspective, the faith of the candidate is an indispensable prerequisite of the baptism of water. Without faith, true baptism cannot occur, only meaningless ablution! The candidate is more than a mere passive recipient or a puppet exclusively controlled by God. He must be a man of faith in order that he can grasp the new mode of existence in communion with God and His people. As Barth claims, "Baptism is itself a good and saving human work comparable to the saving human work of building the ark."⁶⁰² As Noah built the ark with his seven other family members for the day of judgment in obedience to the divine command, baptism is "saving human work" in response to God's invitation to His communion that brings about the new mode of being, the eschatological reality of man. The saving human work does not cease after baptism. It is a teleological and eschatological act of the faithful that continues throughout the Christian life until the coming of the *ἔσχατον*.

Finally, it is clear that Barth's definition of the indissoluble bipolar relational unity between divinely subjective action and humanly subjective action shows it to be *similar* to the pattern of the perichoretic inner divine communion manifested in the economic and soteriological divine involvement in time and space. Barth's definition of the Christian attitude in the manner of the bipolar relational unity of divine action and human action ultimately gives us a dynamic and stimulating view on who *God is* to us, and who *we are* with Him in return. The bipolar relational unity between God and man is not possible in view of the abyss of the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man, in which God is a solitary God who works and rules alone apart from man. However, in the context of the father-child relationship between God and man, God does not will to be or work alone without man. In contrast, God wills to be with man and wants his voluntary and self-motivated participation and partnership in His work.

⁶⁰² Barth, C.D. IV/4, p. 212.

Furthermore, God as the Father even allows Himself to “be *conditioned* in this or that way by His creature.”⁶⁰³ The God we believe in is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who is always living and present with His children. God is the Father who loves and looks after His children by listening and granting our subjective requests, no matter how tedious that may be. God as our Father is not the being who is “self-enclosed, who cannot be codetermined from outside, who is condemned to work alone.”⁶⁰⁴ Rather, He wills our subjective and spontaneous participation in His work that He can be with us, and we can be with Him by working and indwelling in each other in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰⁵

Regarding the bipolar relational unity between the divinely subjective element and the humanly subjective element in Barth’s theology of ethics, there are a few vital issues to which we should pay keen attention. In the bipolar unity of divine action and human action, divine action as the “upper pole” marginally controls human action, the “lower pole.” In this relation and unity, however, neither side manipulates the other or plays an authoritarian role, even though both sides are active and subjective in nature in relation to each other. Consequently, both sides are inseparably related and united and complementary to each other following the pattern of the hypostatic union of the God-man Jesus and the perichoretic union of the inner divine communion manifested in the economic and soteriological divine involvement in time and space. For instance, in contrast to the Schleiermacherian definition of prayer as a kind of alleviation, uplift, and purification that one can achieve on one’s own, Barth defines prayer as a kind of “*reciprocity* between God and man” or of “*codetermination* of a divine action by a human action” in the midst of maintaining the sovereign power of God and human dependence upon Him.⁶⁰⁶

In the light of Barth’s theology of ethics, neither action is active without the other; each action is active and valid only in connection with the other. The

⁶⁰³ Barth, C.D. III/4, p. 108. (Italics mine)

⁶⁰⁴ Barth, C.L., p. 103. Cf. Barth, C.L., p. 86.

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. Barth, C.L., p. 90.

⁶⁰⁶ Barth, C.L., p. 103.

reciprocity and codetermination between divine action and human action are possible because no one else but God Himself wills them. According to Barth, God wills His children's work and participation by willing to work only in connection with their work.⁶⁰⁷ It is no one else but God Himself who desires not to work alone but to work only in relation with His children. God lowers Himself, and in return He lifts us up that He makes Himself conditioned by His children and lets His action be codetermined by them. Divine action and human action in Barth's theology of ethics are indissolubly related and united to each other. Even though God wills and allows His children to participate in and codetermine His work, God never loses control of the "helm" for one second.⁶⁰⁸ God keeps His sovereign lordship in the relation with man, yet He still wills participation of His children in His lordship as partners because "He does not will to be God without us, or to exist as such."⁶⁰⁹

With respect to Barth's theology of ethics, it is certain at this point that the two antithetic, exclusive actions are distinguishable but inseparable, enhancing and emphasising each other's qualities and forming a balanced whole. No one can deny that this relationship between the two actions is possible only through God's grace. However, Barth contends that God decided to "work only in connection with man's work."⁶¹⁰ God is the sovereign Lord and the source of the relationship between divine action and human action, but man is not God's puppet who unconsciously and unwillingly acts according God's compelling will. As Barth explicitly states, "By God's free grace, these people are not *marionettes* who move only at his will."⁶¹¹ In God's free grace, man becomes a child of God who is free and acts according to his own subjective, distinctive will that is yet inseparable from the divine will but *qualitatively transformed* into it by the power of the Holy Spirit. This free child of God can co-determine God's action as God wishes. At the same time, God wills the subjective passionate action of his

⁶⁰⁷ Barth, C.L., p. 103.

⁶⁰⁸ Barth, C.D. III/3, p. 285.

⁶⁰⁹ Barth, C.D. III/4, p. 103.

⁶¹⁰ Barth, C.L., p. 103.

⁶¹¹ Barth, C.L., p. 102. (Italics mine)

child.⁶¹² In His free grace, God makes His children His partners and Himself their partner at work as well. However, in the logic of Barth's complementary dialectic of the bipolar relational unity in tension, the Father becomes always Father to His children, and the children always remain as children to their Father as Jesus Christ remains the Son to His Father in the Holy Spirit in the perichoretic divine communion. This bipolar relational unity between God and man following the pattern of *περιχώρησις* is manifested in the very prayer of our Lord Jesus.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.⁶¹³

⁶¹² Barth, C.L., p. 103.

⁶¹³ John 17: 20-23. (NIV)

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